

Aesthetic Enjoyment

and Other Essays

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(1) Progress, Development and Survival of Man on this Earth

- As viewed by a Buddhist

In 1998, i.e. three years from now, Sri Lanka would claim having had fifty years of independence. Can we be sure of the direction in which we as a liberated people, liberated from centuries of colonial rule, have targeted our

development process during this reasonably long period. From where have we picked up the norms or the yardsticks with which to measure our own progress, not only in the area of economic development, i.e. revenue for our state from anywhere? Or on the other hand, have we been caught up in a competitive, and at the same time a meaningless escalation?

We need to check on its sustainability and its wholesomeness, wholesome to the people for whom it is planned. Are not the people of the land and the land itself becoming a cat's paw in the so-called development process? According to the old stories we have learnt as children, it is the monkey and certainly not the cat who enjoys the nuts so pulled out of the fire.

The last three decades or more of Sri Lankan history yield enough evidence for the verification of this. Not merely gusty winds, no matter where they have had their origin, have blown across our country. We have also been caught up in devastating whirl winds. Today it has to be admitted that we have lost sight of or we have been made insensitive to many important facts of our very existence in this small island which for many centuries has had its own distinct identity.

Multi-ethnicity and multi-religiousness have well and truly been realities in this country for centuries. As far as our memories go, even as far as the early decades of this century, the people of Sri Lanka, no matter to whichever ethnic group they belonged or in which part of the island they lived, did not require to be tutored on this subject. Minor aberrations of relationships have occurred from time to time, but they have been corrected without long lasting side effects. The process and the spirit of give and take has been effectively so good that very little of what might be called serious grievances has persisted.

Personal identities of ethnic, religious or political groups and their peaceful co-existence were never believed to be mutually hostile. Even taking a look back into ancient history, the presence of temples for the worship of Hindu divinities by the royal ladies of Indian origin, within the palace yard of Polonnaruwa, is ample

testimony to this. The first half of this century knew of considerable cultural inter-filtration among the Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Islamic communities of Sri Lanka. We do need to make a very serious and honest attempt for the restoration of such a climate. It is not because it serves the needs of any single group, but because it serves well the cause of all concerned.

With this brief clinical observation of the Sri Lankan infant of today, forty seven years after its delivery, and with the assigned task of rearing it to a healthy and robust growth, let us see how much of our own traditional wisdom could be of benefit to us. In the Buddhist context, development basically means the development of man, his character, his personality, his humanness in brief, alongside the improvement of his material prosperity. This latter are important in terms of the quality of life and in terms of the magnitude of achievement. Without getting an adequate awareness of this, he would not be able to visualize the perimeter of man's development. Viewing development from a highly egoistic angle, either singly or collectively, he would be completely heedless of the ill-effects of his development plans on everybody else besides himself, on the lives of others, on their cultural and religious preferences. He would turn out to be essentially unethical. The increase in the quantity and quality of material accessories which usually accompanies the concept and process of modern development has to be viewed as being only peripheral. Harnessing of all resources for the achievement of supersonic success in this area of materialistic development and economic gain has led many nations and power blocs of the world to unscrupulous and, at times, despicable ways of achievement. It may even be described as a descent to vulgar levels of exploitation of man and nature.

Take just one look at the so-called industrial development of the world. Lack of correct and adequate vision and lack of planning in the interests of the world we live in has led to the overrunning of the activities of man into questionable areas of environment. That industrial waste comes in the wake of industrial

production must be obviously clear to planners and policy makers, even though their laying down of policy often remains confined to the papers on their tables. Value judgements must be evident within the framework of their thinking. Otherwise, one has a right to ask as to who accepts responsibility for the consequences of their planning. This serious and grave offense of omission is now being recognized and reckoned with at international level.

Think of the great disaster that has come upon the Great Lakes of North America. A crime committed many many decades ago. Their aquatic life is ruined to the very rock bottom. On this side of the Atlantic, the same is true of the Baltic and the Mediterranean seas. It is so even of Lake Baikal in Soviet Russia. Over the last thirty or forty years the world has been learning the bitter lessons of these. But the obstinacy and the stubbornness of those, both above and below, in this part of the world makes us insensitive to the pollution and destruction of the environment that man, in his search for development, is generating here, right at our door-step. We are making dead seas of what were once flourishing breeding grounds of fish and prawn, and for that very reason, veritable sources of pleasure and delight because of the very presence of life therein. Lunawa lagoon, said to be now stacked with industrial waste, is a good example. It is a good example of misguided industrial expansion. I stress here the word misguided because whether in the private sector or at state level these developmental ventures must be launched after careful deliberation and counselling. Bypassing instruction, and even danger signals, primarily in the interests of personal gain has been witnessed too often in Sri Lanka, and that far beyond a point of annoyance.

This approach to the question of development necessarily sets limits on all sides. But it must be admitted that limits are and have to be a *sine qua non* of all development, for that is the guarantee, on the one hand, for efficiency and perfection in the very process of development and on the other, against toxication of human life and pollution and contamination of the environment. It

must now be emphatically stated that whether here or there, any launching of development projects, without accepting responsibility for the consequences that come in their wake, i.e. without any reference to what in cultured societies of rulers or the ruled are called value judgements, is virtually a move in the direction of genocide. At the level of world thinking today, whether the killing or destruction is of human life or animal life or whether the destruction results in death or near death, the social scientists are inclined to hold the policy planners responsible for these mass manouvres. Let us, these wise men we are, not forget this level of thinking. Therefore any development policy planning which results in the deterioration of the life of man and the environment in which he lives or eventually leads to the deterioration of his cultural considerations has to be conscientiously condemned and rejected even though such a line of action is known to rip the pockets of a few who are determined to make the money and benefit at the expense of the many. Is any country or any group of people by duty bound to oblige and support an underworld of this kind?

Let us here take an example. Whether it is the lack of concern or the reluctance to prevent the digging up of the coral belt around the southern shores of Sri Lanka or the raping of the island's forest cover including the Sinharaja range, or the diabolically planned or unplanned increase in the production and consumption of alcohol in the country, all these carry an element of viciousness, a death-dealing sting embedded in the development conscience. Are we to forgive the pioneers and policy makers for these lapses simply because they have placed the telescope on the blind eye? Whether one directly perceives it or not, the pernicious effects of such actions on the country and the people are neither to be lost sight of nor treated lightly.

I attempt in this essay to indicate as to what should be the bed-rock of a development consciousness in Buddhism. Its primary motivation has to be humanitarian and that too essentially in the direction of magnanimous collective welfare, thus all the time leaving no room for the overgrowth of egoistic

promptings of individuals or of groups, however large or small. This has to be the true social scientist's attitude of concern for the good of the vast majority of people: *bahunojanassa atthaya hitaya sukhaya* as the Buddhist texts put it. This thoroughly humanistic approach in determining the correctness or otherwise of man's activities is clearly witnessed in the Buddha's advice to his own son Rahula, saying that approval for action depends entirely on the goodness or otherwise of the results of such activity undertaken. One is called upon to ask the question Does such action have good results on oneself or on others? One has to probe into this aspect very carefully: *paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā kamma* □ *kattabba* □ (M.I. 415)

This being the Buddhist attitude to activity, in any form, any where and every where, the concept of development must be viewed and examined with sanity and with a down-to-earth realism. Injury to another, man, animal or nature, in any conjured up vision of development, cannot be permitted. This is not merely a religious consideration. At least Buddhism as a religion, does not subordinate man to the divine or subordinate nature to man. Nothing is created for the specific purpose of consumption by man. That is too primitive a belief of only eat and live. Each has its own rightful place and it is their healthy and correct coordination which leads to successful growth and development of the collective total group. The sane world today is becoming aware of it and accepting it in principle. The ozone belt above the earth, adequate forest cover on land, and many such others are vital considerations for our own existence on this earth. Let not development ventures in their warped and distorted patterns ride rough-shod over the peace and happiness of man on earth.

Anything contrary to this, by whatever name one calls it, development or any other, and no matter by whom they are started, have to be challenged and rejected, at least for the survival of man on earth, if not for anything else. It can be done and has been done by men of courage and sanity in many parts of the world and great catastrophies have been averted. Let those obsessed with

ambitious plans of development take serious note of this warning. It is written on the wall. *Yāvadeva anattāya -attaṃ bāalassa jāyate.* Dhp.v.72

The knowledge of the fool is born to bring about his utter ruin and destruction.

(2) The Message of Buddhism from Buddha to Asoka

-Its relevance to the twenty-first century

India would do well to disseminate and deliver the message of Buddhism to the world, and she would, at the same time, profit immensely by claiming at least half ownership to it, even today. I feel confident to assert that no country to the east or west, north or south of India would ever dispute or deny it. India is one region where inspite of the upheavals of the modern world, the identity of history would remain firm and faithful. India's leadership, more than two millenia ago, in moulding the character of man, and in guiding his pioneering aspirations and achievements, both in spiritual and scientific territories, will never be forgotten.

Buddhist legends record that the birth place of the Buddha, and therefore that of Buddhism, had to be India.

Tato dīpam vilokento saparivāre cattāro dīpe oloketvā tīsu dīpesu buddhā na nibbattanti jambudīpe yeva nibbattanti'ti dīpam passi. Jataka Vol.I.p.49

The idea expressed here is that the Bodhisatta, i.e. the Buddha aspirant or future Buddha, looking out for the land where he was going to be born, surveyed the four adjacent regions and concluded that the Buddhas are never born in any of the other three besides India.

Looking at this in terms of the time of the Buddha's appearance, the period around the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. saw in many parts of the world an intellectual awakening with a religio-cultural vibrancy. Teachings of Confucius

and Lao tze held sway in China, influencing the lives of the people to a greater or lesser degree. Very few, or hardly any of these, except Buddhism, continue to guide the lives of the people of the world today. Time has swallowed up nearly every one of them. It shall be our endeavour today to reflect on the magnitude of this influence of Buddhism over our contemporary human society.

Starting at the nearer end of history, at the tail end of the twentieth century, i.e. nearly twentyfive centuries after the birth of the Buddha in Lumbini and the emergence of Buddhism thirtyfive years after that event, we have a proud record to place before the world. Comparable to Neil Armstrong's vision of this planet from the moon, there are many thinkers and philosophers of the world today who as non-Indians, viewing Buddhism completely from outside, make a universal appraisal, i.e. an assessment regarding the universal applicability, of Buddhism and make it known to the world for the good of mankind.

More than thirteen years ago, a high-ranking official of the UNESCO, the late Dr. Raphaelo M. Salas of the Philipines, who was the population expert at the United Nations, in a Special Convocation address at the University of Colombo in 1979, appealed to the people of Sri Lanka to offer to the world as a gift for the twentyfirst century, this special message of Buddhism. It runs as

He who overcomes in this world this base and unruly craving, from him all sorrows fall away like drops of water from a lotus leaf.

Referring to the Buddha as a wise old man of India, he was quoting verse no.336 of the Dhammapada which runs as follows.

*Yo c'etam sahate jammim tanham loke duraccayam sokā tamhā papatanti
udabindū'va pokkharā*

Buddhism ranks high as a religion in the world today because of its highly efficient salvation scheme. There are two unique features which account for this success. Via this system of Buddhist thinking and living, man is enabled to taste

and partake of this transcendental bliss of release, here and now: *dittheva dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā* (M.I.35). An arhant, i.e. a fully liberated person according to Buddhism, partakes of the bliss of nirvāna in this very life. He is a *jīvan mukta* in other words, and is seen rejoicing over his release. Behold here Thera Angulimala, giving expression to such joy : *Atha kho āyasmā aṅgulimālo rahogato patisallāno vimuttisukhaṃ paṭisamvedī tāyaṃ velāyaṃ imaṃ udānaṃ udānesi* (M.II.104). As one who has attained the goal of his striving in this very existence (*Bhikkhu araham khīnāsavo anuppattasadattho* (M.I.4) the arhant has terminated the painful birth and death process of *samsāra*. This is referred to in Pali as *khīnā jāti* as well as *parikkhīnabhavasamyojano* (ibid.). Such a person is aware of his achievement and exults over it: *vimuttasmiṃ vimuttan'ti ñānaṃ hoti... nāparaṃ itthattayā'ti pajānāti* (M.I.297). For him, it is no leap in the dark. Secondly, this psycho-ethical way of life-correction in pursuit of nirvāna makes the world around us a richer and happier place for man and animals to live in. How gloriously true then is the statement that the birth of Buddhas is bliss to the world: *sukho buddhānam uppādo* (Dhp.v.194)? The word of the Buddhas, i.e. the teachings of Buddhism, re-sets as it were, the tempo of the world. The world is thereby made a richer and happier place. The truth of this statement that the birth of Buddhas is bliss to the world perhaps never came out in such sharp focus as in Joseph Goldstein's 1991-92 Wit Lectures delivered at the Divinity School of the Harvard University. Understanding Buddhism, and with a total commitment to it, Goldstein has, before learned audiences in the west, given eloquent expression to the worth of Buddhism in the world today. The Harvard Divinity Bulletin (Harvard University - The Divinity School. 1992. Volume 21 Number 3) reporting the event thus, puts it beautifully.

In his first lecture, " Transforming the Mind, Healing the World, " Goldstein discussed what he called a triangle of three spiritual values: love, compassion and wisdom. He explained that it is possible to attain the state of loving kindness, known as *mettā* in Pali or *maitrī* in Sanskrit, which is free from the desire and

attachment that characterize love as we usually understand it. When we are filled with loving kindness, we wish others to be happy, at peace, and free from suffering, without any expectation of return or even of acknowledgment.

Here we see Goldstein as a conveyer of a message to the world and in it we see his commitment to Buddhism. What strikes us most here is Goldstein's awareness as to what truly is the message of Buddhism. That Buddhism, through its primary salvific message, makes better men of men and makes the world a happier and much more wholesome place to live in. And in the process, the goal of Buddhism is attained. Meet Goldstein again at his second lecture and see him reported in this manner in the Harvard Divinity Bulletin quoted earlier.

The Buddha talked of three trainings on the path: morality, concentration and mindful awareness, and wisdom. Morality is the commitment to non-harming, Goldstein said, and we can train ourselves in it through several methods. One is to be aware of the effect of our actions on our minds.

We should note here the charm with which Goldstein brings before a competitively aggressive world the most profound teachings of Buddhism with a down-to-earth simplicity that grips our minds. He has immersed us in the doctrine of threefold training or *tisso sikkhā* of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. And he has challengingly brought us face to face with the doctrine of karma, in speaking of 'the effect of our actions on our minds'. We cannot but admire his keenly sensitive follow up which he does with perfect coherence. Here it is.

The five Buddhist precepts also foster moral development: not killing, not stealing, not committing sexual misconduct, not using wrong speech, and not taking intoxicants that confuse the mind. Goldstein emphasized the rewards that can come out of attention to each precept. For example, watching our own speech can disclose how much of what we say is judgmental both of ourselves and of others. Training in morality is a practice, he said and is the foundation of a spiritual life. "Our practice is not to follow the heart, it is to train the heart," he

quoted a well known aphorism.

We wish to state here that we can trace back this observation of Goldstein to a remark of Venerable Sariputta made to Venerable Moggallana, describing a Buddhist disciple whom he considers to be a distinguished person of very high calibre.

*Idh'āvuso Moggallāna bhikkhu cittaṃ vasaṃ vatteti no ca cittassa
vasena vattati... Evarupena kho āvuso Moggallāna bhikkhunā
Gosingasālvanam sobheyyā'ti. Mahagosīngasutta (M.I.214)*

O Moggallana, herein a monk keeps his mind under control. He is not under the control of the mind. Such a monk, O Moggallana, lends distinction to this Sala Grove of Gosīnga.

I am convinced that while you hear me quote from Goldstein's lectures you would be agreeing with the Divinity School Bulletin's observations about the lecturer himself.

Goldstein's personal presence embodies the tranquility and peace that vipassanā promises.

We have indeed no doubt about this comment. *Bhāvanā* of Buddhism is a living process of culture and a person who has taken to it in earnest does reflect it in his own life.

Now as I stand before you in this sacred city of Baranasi my mind goes back to beyond twentyfive centuries of ancient history. The Buddha, in his enlightenment, transcended the world and rose above it - *tinno loke visattikam* (M.I.175). This means that he freed himself from the stranglehold of the world, the world that taints and corrupts: *anāpāthagato bhikkhave pāpimato* (ibid.). This he did by his own personal grasp of the nature of the world, that is the nature of the beings therein, one and all including himself. He knows why they are in

samsāra, in this cycle of births and deaths and why they continue to do so.

This knowledge he reveals to us in his basic teachings of the Four Noble Truths and the Chain of Dependent Origination which are known to all Buddhists under the name of *caturārya satya* and *pratītya samutpāda*. The Buddha's salvific way is a challenge of the world, a challenge of its nature, and therefore his teachings came to be called 'moving against the current': *patīsotāgami*. And for this same reason, he is said to have been very reticent to deliver his message to a world of shallow interests and petty quarrelsomeness. Such worldlings would find it difficult to grasp my teachings well, he argued: *rāgadosaparetehi nāyam dhammo susambudho* (M.I.168). Arguing further, he added that the veil of ignorance (*avijjā*) which prevents people from seeing the truth must be torn asunder as is implied in statements like *avijjam dālayissami* (Thag.v.544) and *tamokkhandho padālito* (S.I.130). He left the people of the world completely free to accept his teachings on their own choice. Compulsion was not within the framework of his thinking. He prefaced his proclamation with these words:

'Open for them are the doors to deathlessness. They who have ears to hear, let them put forth faith'.

This idea is found expressed in Pali as

Apārutā tesam amatassa dvārā ye sotavanto pamuñcantu saddham (M.I.169)

Another characteristic feature of the teachings of the Buddha that went along with this is that the Buddha's dhamma is for those who have the capacity to stop and think, for those endowed with paññā: *paññavatāyam dhammo no duppaññassa* (A.IV.229). For the faculty of paññā or wisdom is born of clear logical thinking. Such wisdom must be gradually built up and acquired. It is nurtured through faith and trust (*saddhā*), zealous application (*virīya*), mindful culture (*sati*) and complete mastery over the mind as a major component of life (*samādhi*). These are among the faculties latent in us (*pañca indriya*) which are to be developed and turned into strengths (*pañca bala*) for the production of the

final tool of wisdom (*paññā*) which is indispensable for the acquisition of liberation. The Buddha himself declares that he who does not get beyond the preliminary stage of faith and trust (*saddhā*), gathers no more than the peripheral benefit of birth in a happy state of existence or *sagga*.

yesam mayi saddhā mattam pemamattam sabbe te saggaparāyanā.

Alagaddūpamasutta (M.I.142) In the eyes of some hasty critics this observation would appear to be a very severe acid test at the entry point to the religion of the Buddha. But a sober analysis and judgement would reveal that the gradually acquired and developed states like *saddhā*, *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi* are pre-requisites which finally assure the acquisition of *paññā*, almost at the final stage of the liberation process. For there is no release in the absence of *paññā*. It is by virtue of this gradual development process, from the grosser to the finer, that the entire liberation process of Buddhism has come to be called the GRADUAL WAY : *anupubbāsikkhā anupubbakiriyā anupubbapatipadā* (M.I.479f.). The Kīṭāgiri sutta where this idea is beautifully clarified says that the acquisition of this wisdom does not take place with a bang, as it were, at the very commencement of the liberation process.

Nāham bhikkhave ādikeneva aññārādhanaṃ vadāmi. Api ca bhikkhave anupubbāsikkhā anupubbakiriyā anupubbapatipadā aññārādhanaṃ hoti.
(M.I.479 f.)

Papañcasūdanī, the Commentary of Buddhaghosa Thera on the Majjhima Nikāya, explaining this further, says that one does not get to the state of arhant, i.e. acquire that wisdom at the very first instance like the movement of a frog leaping from one place to another. These words are placed in the mouth of the Buddha himself in this manner.

Ahaṃ bhikkhave paṭhamaṃ eva mandūkassa uppativā gamaṇaṃ viya aññārādhanaṃ arahatte paṭiṭṭhānaṃ na vadāmi. (MA.III.193)

The presentaion in this manner of the gaining of wisdom for final release in

Buddhism (note *paññāya parisujjhati*. Sn.v.184 and *paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīnā honti*. M.I.477) gives it an acquirability which brings it within the reach of every being who even in a slow process spread through a shorter or a longer period of time could build for himself that watch-tower of wisdom from where he would be enabled to scan the entire horizon of life. This situation is clearly envisaged in Buddhist texts. Dhammapada verse no.28 puts it as

Pamādam appamādena yadā nudati pandito paññāpāsādamāruyha asoko sokinim pajam pabbatatto'va bhummatthe dhīro bāle avekkhati.

A wise man rids himself of slackness and heedlessness through diligent application. Such a man of strength (*dhīro*) who is freed from grief, ascends the Mansion of Wisdom, and beholds the grieving low-quality worldlings, like a man on a cliff top who sees the men on the ground below.

This vision of the world referred to here is obviously the most triumphant moment in the spiritual quest of Buddhism. Being a personal achievement within oneself, it is not only gloriously attractive and blissful, but verifiably attainable here and now (not being a state to be expected in a life beyond the present), but only with the proviso of diligent application (*pamādam appamādena*) as the Dhammapada verse quoted above insists.

The reference to it in the Buddha's own autobiographical sutta, Ariyapariyesana, is even more vivid.

Sele yathā pabbatamuddhanitthito yathā'pi passe janatam samantato tathūpamaṃ dhammamayaṃ sumedha pāsādamāruyha samantacakkhu sokāvatinnaṃ janataṃ apetasoko avekkhassu jātijarābhibhūtaṃ. (M.I.168)

Just as a man perched high on a cliff top sees the people all around him, so may you, O Lord, as the all-seeing wise one ascend the Mansion of Truth (*dhammamayaṃ pāsādam*), and freed as you are from all grief, behold the people who are plunged in sorrow, being tormented by birth and decay.

Such a heart-warming concept of a compassionate Buddha who looks upon mankind with pity for their suffering, formulated and presented by Mahā Brahmā as is alleged (see Ariyapariyesana sutta M.I.168), apparently gained wide popularity. The Bodirājakumāra sutta (M.II.91-97) refers to this same incident and this same concept of the compassionate Buddha via a report said to have been made by the Buddha himself.

I venture to suggest here that this very picture of an All-seeing Compassionate Lord conjures up before our eyes the forerunner of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara who emerges at a later date in the Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra (Ch.xxiv. Smantamukhaparivartah) as the harbinger of the Mahayana doctrine of salvation by faith. Note here the Chinese rendering of this name Avalokitesvara as Kuan Yin : the Seeing Lord (the word being broken as avalokita + īsvara). The Chinese also have a rendering Kuan Shih Yin which could be translated as the Lord who sees and hears (the supplications of the grieving world). Here they apparently break the word as avalokita + svara.

It is interesting to note what Ludwig Bachhofer in his A Short History of Chinese Art (1944) says of these Kuan Yin statues of China (Plates 1 & 2).

All these things create the illusion that Kuan Yin in flesh and blood has descended to hear the plights of the worried. A few words must be said about the expression. Though all these Kuan Yins show compassion and sympathy, every one of them seems to differ from the other in intelligence and temperament... They are no longer variants of a single type as were the Bodhisattvas of classic times.

The Japanese, picking up the more correct rendering Kuan Yin, have it as Kannon/Kwannon. We should also note here such usages as Kuze Kannon (World-saving Kannon) (Plates 3 & 4), Koyasu Kannon or Kannon of Easy Deliverance i.e. Kuan Yin as a divinity presiding over pregnancy as well as safe and easy delivery of babies at birth, sitting at times with a baby in her hands (See

Gods of Northern Buddhism - Alice Getty, p 96) and Kudara Kannon, the most delightfully artistic statue of Kuan Yin from Korea (Plate 5). What is most remarkable here is the gradual evolution from a once vigorous male divinity of the Indian and Central Asian regions into a very graceful lady-like divinity in China and Japan. This new mother-like concept of the divinity has now fittingly come to be called the Goddess of Mercy. In the earlier male form of the divinity there was apparently the need for him to possess a thousand eyes in order to be the All-seeing One. Here we should remind ourselves that the Ariyapariyesana sutta, or more precisely Brahmā Sahampati in the Ariyapariyesana sutta, says that the Buddha is samantacakkhu or has eyes on all sides. This, in turn, led to the development of a thousand arms for Avalokitesvara in the palms of which those eyes came to be conveniently located (Plate 6). Kuan Yin's popularity (so also of Kannon) in the Far East is all too well known, particularly to a distinguished audience like you, to need further elaboration.

Thus Buddhism from its earliest phase, with its message of love and concern for the unenlightened and underprivileged beings of the world, with also the hint of benevolently looking upon them (*avekkhassu jātijarābhibhūtam*) seems to have carried with it an open invitation to all those who needed to be cared and loved and looked after, without any discrimination of being affluent or elite, of being privileged or outcast, or being of the chosen people or not. There was in the words of the Buddha, a message and comfort for everyone, to each according to his need. Angulimala, as the conceited brigand needed, in his own interest, to have his pride crushed (M.II.97-100). Patacara had to be told, even in a circuitous way, of the reality of death, particularly when it happened to be that of her beloved first born child (Thig.vv.127-132). Sunita who was despised on account of being a municipal scavenger, carrying the city's dirt-load on a pole on his shoulder, found admission into the monastic order of the Buddha without any reservations. He found therein the solace of his life (Thag.vv.620-631). So were many others in the degraded grades of prostitutes and courtezans. Little wonder then about the wide popularity of Buddhism among all ranks of human society

right from its inception, in all places where Buddhism found its way.

In spite of this inherent vigour and vitality of Buddhism, the few centuries which preceded the Asokan era had witnessed a lamentable degree of deterioration of the Buddhist dispensation. But very fortunately for all mankind, enough was still left in India for Asoka to rediscover the whole of true Buddhism, in spirit and letter, in theory and practice. The renowned third Buddhist Council of Pataliputra, convened by him under the able direction and guidance of Thera Moggaliputta Tissa, preserved for posterity the authentic Buddhist texts of the Canon, including the Abhidhamma. Almost under imperial command, he ordered a re-institution of the activities of the Buddhist Sangha, including the observance of the uposatha. Combining his devotion to Buddhism and his dedication and determination to propagate it everywhere in the world with his politics and his diplomacy, he achieved a victory unparalleled anywhere in history. Of this, Shri Nehru says the following in his *Discovery of India*.

His messengers and ambassadors went to Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Cyrene, and Epirus, conveying his greeting and Buddha's message. They went to Central Asia and to Burma and Siam and he sent his own son and daughter, Mahendra and Sanghamitra, to Ceylon in the south. Everywhere an appeal was made to the mind and the heart; there was no force or compulsion. Ardent Buddhist as he was, he showed respect and consideration for all other faiths...

Buddhism spread rapidly in India from Kashmir to Ceylon. It penetrated into Nepal and later reached Tibet and China and Mongolia. In India, one of the consequences of this was the growth of vegetarianism and abstention from alcoholic drinks. Till then both Brahmins and Ksatriyas often ate meat and drank wine. Animal sacrifice was forbidden. *Discovery of India* p.123.

Thanks to the missionary zeal of Asoka to which Shri Nehru refers here and the consequent spread of Buddhism outside India, both in eastern and western directions, Buddhism reached almost the shores of the Caspian Sea. Here it may

well be to recall what Abu'l - Rayhan Muhammad al Birūni said nearly a thousand years ago about the success of Buddhism in that region.

In former times Khorasan, Persia, Iraq, Mosul, the country up to the frontier of Syria, was Buddhistic, but then Zarathustra went forth from Ždharbāyjān and preached Magism in Balkh (Baktra)... The succeeding kings made their religion (i.e. Zoroastrianism) the obligatory state religion of Persia and Iraq. In consequence, the Buddhists were banished from those countries and had to emigrate to the countries east of Balkh. B.A.Litvinsky in Encyclopaedia of Buddhism. Vol.IV.Fasc.I.p.21.

More specifically about Buddhism's contribution to early Iranian culture note what historians of today, independently have to say.

In the words of Barthold, " neither the Sassanian state nor its official religion, Zoroastrianism, ever comprised the entire Iranian world. In the later-period cultural life of the Iranian world, Buddhist Iran played a part of no less importance than Zoroastrian Iran." Recent archaeological discoveries in Western Turkestan lend a truly prophetic ring to these words. Ibid.p.51

As proof of the popularity, prestige and power of Buddhism in western Asia around the beginning of the Christian era there stand massive monuments in stone, sculptures showing incidents from the life of the Buddha etc. Coming from Shotorak in Afghanistan and dating back to the third century A.D. is an admirably touching scene of the historical Buddha Gotama as ascetic Sumedha in one of his earlier births, seeking an assurance from the very ancient Buddha Dīpamkara about his own attainment of Buddhahood at a later date (Plate 7. See also Jataka Vol.1 p.15) This single stone carving belonging to such an early date could be declared a volume of history on the development of Buddhist civilization and culture. It is indeed a thesis on Buddhology. So is the Buddha in the Miracles of Sravasti from Paitava in Afghanistan (Plate 8). Equally formidable is the giant Buddha statue of Bamian standing at 175 feet in height (Plate 9). Belonging to

this same later period of 6th - 7th centuries are also excellent remains of Buddhist paintings of Bodhisattvas from places like Bamian, both in Iranian style and in Indo - Chinese style of Central Asia (Plate 10). + About Asoka's leanings on Buddhism and his deep convictions regarding its teachings, we entertain no doubts. We are inclined to believe that he was an ardent Buddhist, as Shri Nehru puts it. Viewing it from Sri Lanka's end, see how the Mahavamsa, our Grand Chronicle, records it. Put in the mouth of Asoka himself, it reads as follows.

I have taken refuge in the Buddha, his Doctrine and his Order. I have declared myself a lay-disciple in the religion of the Sakya's son; seek then even thou, O best of men, converting thy mind with believing heart refuge in these best of gems. Mahāvamsa XI.vv.34-35

Asoka's remarkable turn from war to peace must certainly be sought here. Killing for the propagation of religions or expansion of kingdoms must come to an end today, today itself and not tomorrow. And after the bitter lessons of war, even from more recent history including Hiroshima, we are confident that the twentyfirst century would crown Asoka once more, as a great monarch with great sensitivity to lessons learnt through experience of life. If men of the world of today have anything which may be called sense or sanity, twenty centuries of world history should be rich enough to teach them that men and animals of the world are not to be staked to please and appease hungry and angry gods above, including those raised to divinity in more recent times. Destruction in the name of religious or political ideologies or racial supremacies has definitely to be a thing of the stupid past.

Before I bring this address to a close today, I owe it as a duty to say also a few words in appreciation of the great service rendered to the cause of Buddhism by the Mahabodhi Society of India and the persons connected with it. Buddhists all over the world must legitimately feel proud to have been able to witness the centenary celebrations of the Mahabodhi Society, a hundred years of fruitful existence. The Sambhasa, the Centenary Commemorative Volume brought out

on this occasion is monumental not only in terms of the scholarship it reflects but also in terms of the immense unstinted service of devoted men which has spread through a hundred years. Both the scholars for their contribution and the editorial staff for their ceaseless work must be lauded and congratulated. It would be correct to say that it has remained the main beacon of light in Mahabodhi Society's activities. What the Mahabodhi has retrieved and restored in terms of the heritage of Buddhism is inestimable.

We should also at this stage remember how under the guidance and inspiration of Buddhist thinking, the late Dr. Ambedkar worked ceaselessly in the area of social reform in India. Putting to the fore, as it were, the Buddhist norm of *na jaccā vasalo hoti na jaccā hoti brāhmano*, namely that it is not by birth that a man becomes high or low in social esteem, Dr. Ambedkar stood up to fight for the redemption of his own caste whose ill-treatment in India, which even social decency of the world today would condemn in no uncertain terms. Let alone any other norm of judgement. We feel legitimately proud that the Mahabodhi Society provided Dr. Ambedkar the necessary battlement for his crusade.

As for the person behind it, Anagarika Dharmapala, all that we need to say is that his name is indelibly carved in the history of the Buddhist world. A hundred years ago, the visit of a young Sri Lankan at the age of twentyseven saw the birth of the Mahabodhi in India. Today, a hundred years later, I come to you at the age of seventytwo, a much older man, to reiterate the glory of Buddhism in the twenty-first century.

I have always held that the greatest achievement in the life of Anagarika Dharmapala was his final renunciation to become the Buddha's true *srāvaka*, Bhiksu Devamitra. And today, this indeed is the happiest moment of my life to have done exactly as he did, in my renunciation of the world and to stand before you in this very place where he stood and plead for a respread of Buddhist values in the world of the twenty-first century.

(3) Aesthetic Enjoyment within the Framework of Buddhist Thinking

- A brief study

Aesthetic sensibility and enjoyment, primarily and essentially, consist of our reactions to our environment. In the philosophy of the Buddha we discover a wealth of information which helps us to plan and adjust our life in the world in a healthy, reasonable and justifiable way. Through this philosophy, we get out of our life in the world the maximum benefit and happiness. We also do not allow ourselves to tread on others' corns or, unwittingly though, burn our own fingers. This, it must be remembered, is a fundamental concept of our *dharma* or the Buddhist norm. It is the rule of *attūpanāyika*, i.e. that one acts and reacts towards others in the same way that one likes to be treated by others [e.g. *attānaṃ upmaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye*. Dhp.v.129]. It is the recurrent theme of the *Ambalatthika Rahulovada Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikaya* where the Buddha admonishes his son Rahula that before doing anything through thought, word or deed, one should scrutinize carefully [*paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā kattabbaṃ*] whether such action stands to the detriment of oneself [*attavyābādhāya*] or to the detriment of others [*paravyābādhāya*]. In evolving such a sensible and rewarding philosophy of life, the Buddhists do not withdraw into a frozen ice-chamber or plunge into an arid dry desert. Nor do they have to, with an unwarranted idea of the holy, set the spirit to fight against the body and practise severe asceticism.

Therefore this does not necessarily carry with it the renunciation complexion generally associated with the shaven-headed, dyed-robed monk. Nevertheless, it would ultimately lead to the highest achievements of Buddhist religious living which both converge in and are gathered at the perfect state of ego-lessness required of the recluse, often described as a state of dignified detachment.

The philosophy of the Buddha and the way of life he recommended was in marked contrast to what was prevalent in certain circles in India at the time. In the religious controversies of the time, in the battle of the spirit against the body, the flesh was tortured and human life was degraded to lamentably low depths. These are described in graphic detail in the Mahasaccaka Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya [M.1. 242-5] where the Bodhisatta, while he was yet experimenting in his search for release, is seen indulging in them. Finally the Bodhisatta rejected them as being of no avail. Once King Pasenadi of Kosala, while he was in the company of the Buddha, spoke of the followers of such creeds in the following words:

"There I see recluses and Brahmins who are emaciated and lean, discoloured and looking exceedingly pale. The veins have become visible all over their bodies. People will indeed not be delighted to see them." [See Majjhima Nikaya 11.121. Dhammacetiya Sutta]

When these religious men were questioned by the King as to what motivated them into these austere practices, their reply was that it was their religious heritage and that this self-inflicted physical tyranny was part of their religious discipline [Bandhuka-rogo no mahārājā ' ti. loc.cit]. Religious men who indulged in such practices freely roamed the streets of India then as some of them do even today.

In the above description of some of the contemporary Indian ascetics as being repulsive, the original texts use a phrase which means 'do not catch the eye of the onlooker ' [*Na viya maññe cakkhuñ bandhanti janassa dassanāya*]. This means that on seeing them, feelings of pleasure or joy do not arise in the minds of people. We call an object which comes within the range of our vision beautiful, under normal conditions, in relation to the degree of pleasurable feelings it generates within us, i.e. to the degree of pleasurable acceptability we are willing to offer it. In this realm of beauty, namely visual, colour and form are dominant considerations. In defining or judging beauty, whether there are absolute criteria

in relation to colour and form, is a debatable point. They are judged, for the most part, on accepted values, accepted collectively or individually. Through collective persuasion, impersonally though, these values acquire semi-absolute standards. Groups, as much as individuals, would declare things as being beautiful on this basis. If one were to thoroughly simplify this concept of beauty, one could say ' a thing of beauty is joy for ever '. Likewise objects also become capable of giving delight and producing pleasurable feelings through personal association. Such objects then become beautiful, meaningful and significant. Here, memory as well as personal identification and association as well as re-creation and re-association of situations of the past sometimes add to the beauty of an object of the present.

Although this appears to be a totally subjective approach and hence bound to lead to a diversity of notions and standards, one can nevertheless discern at times an objective continuity running through this diversity. In these cases we are looking at the beauty-value of objects from the point of their producing pleasurable feelings in the minds of those who behold them. At the same time, beauty does not need to be always equivalent to what is pretty or good looking, as expressed in common parlance.

Objects which are not pretty on the normally accepted terms are capable of stimulating emotions and giving aesthetic delight because of their special significance to the person concerned. Here, it is not the mere subjective, personal factor. One uses here a different yard-stick, out of the common run of man. In defining beauty and the appeal of beauty, this is what is sometimes called ' the action of the mind '. Even what is weird and grotesque, is capable at times of being beautiful and producing aesthetic delight. The disciples of the Buddha, with their serene sense of detachment, found such places and things particularly inspiring. The venerable Sariputta, undoubtedly the foremost of the Buddha's disciples, is found commending in the verses of the Theragatha, the austerity of the dwelling place of his younger brother, Revata. Thus he says:

In village or the wild, in vale or hill, Wherever the men of worth, the arahants
 Their dwelling make, delightful is the spot. Delightful are the forests, where no
 crowd Doth come to take its pleasures; there will they Who are released from
 passions find their joy. Not seekers they for sense-satiety. Thag. 991-2

Note here the words ' Not seekers they for sense-satiety ' [*na te kāmā-
 gavesino*]. For evidently, a good part of true beauty would indeed be shut out from
 those who are mere pleasure seekers. Elsewhere in the Theragatha, the sylvan
 retreats which Kassapa the Great describes as soul-delighting, had indeed a
 beauty which was peculiarly their own.

Those upland glades delightful to the soul, Where the Kareri spreads its
 wildering wreaths, Where sound the trumpet-calls of elephant: Those are the
 braes wherein my soul delights. Those rocky heights with hue of dark blue
 clouds, Where lies enbosomed many a shining tarn Of crystal-clear, cool waters
 and whose slopes The `herds of Indra' cover and bedeck: Those are the braes
 wherein my soul delights.

Like serried battlements of blue-black cloud Like pinnacles on stately castle
 built, Re-echoing to the cries of jungle folk: Those are the braes wherein my soul
 delights. Thag. 1062-64

Crags where clear waters lie, a rocky world, Haunted by black-faced apes
 and timid deer, Carpeted with watery moss and lichen: Those are the braes
 wherein my soul delights. Thag 1070

In the above verses, expressions like ' where sound the trumpet-calls of
 elephants', ' Re-echoing to the cries of jungle folk ', ' Haunted by black-faced
 apes and timid deer ' and ' Carpeted with watery moss and lichen ' have a
 distinctness of their own. It must also be conceded that they reflect the
 emergence of a particular culture pattern. But the extent to which it found
 expression and developed later to a fuller richness, depended on the particular
 genius of the different people into whose midst Buddhism found its way.

Buddhists of Japan, particularly those of the early Zen tradition stand unique in this respect.

To give our listeners a sampling of the heights to which Buddhist thinking elevated Japanese poets, let me quote a couple verses written by the great Haiku poet of Japan of the 17th century - Master Basho. Sitting lonely in a solitary hut with only a banana plant nearby as his good neighbour, Basho writes -

A banana plant in the autumn gale - I listen to the dripping of rain into a basin at night.

Does this not remind one of the ecstasies of the forest-dwelling monks of the Theragatha we have discussed in detail above? Here is yet another from Master Basho and his comrade poets.

Above a town
 Filled with the odors of things,
 The Summer moon.
 " It's hot ! " "It's hot ! "
 Murmurs are heard in the front yards.

What a beautiful study in contrast of our bustling metropolitan life which we ourselves have created and the potential of inner peace which lies so close with nature in the world outside ! As a man of mature sanctity and deep conviction, a fortnight before his death Basho wrote this haiku.

A white chrysanthemum -
 However intently I gaze,
 Not a speck of dirt.

This attitude also made it possible at times to convert even what was perilous and imminently dangerous into a source of delight and inspiration and to view it

with admiration. Here is Thera Talaputa telling us of a phase of life he has been through:

There in the jungle ringing with cries of peacock and of heron wilt thou dwell,
By panthers and by tigers owned as chief. And for thy body cast off care; Miss
not thine hour, thine aim! Thag 1113

We run into an even more interesting situation in the story of Ekavihariya Thera who tells us thus: Yea, swiftly and alone, bound to my quest, I'll to the jungle that I love, the haunt Of infuriated elephants, the source and means Of thrilling zest to each ascetic soul. Thag 539

Even an underlying threat to life like the panthers and tigers and the infuriated elephants does not appear to rob the collective ensemble of its inherent beauty. To appreciate fully the reward of this cultivated Buddhist attitude, we should particularly mark the words 'swiftly' and 'alone', 'bound to my quest', 'infrigated elephants' and 'thrilling zest to each ascetic soul'. What is of further interest to us is that the Commentary tells us that this Ekavihariya Thera is none other than the younger brother Tissa of the Emperor Asoka. We are told that the prince, while hunting, was so impressed at the sight of the Greek Thera Yonaka Maha Dhammarakkhita seated under a tree, that he also longed to live so in the forest. Longing for the happiness of the recluse, he is said to have uttered the above verses. If we give adequate credence here to the Commentarial tradition, it implies the vibrant continuance of the Buddhist aesthetic values we have discussed above and their survival even after several centuries.

[All translations of the Theragatha are from Mrs. Rhys Davids' Psalms of the Brethren].

(4) Women and the Religious Order of the Buddha

Venerable Professor Dhammavihari

At the time the Buddha set up his Order of Bhikkhus, there was in Indian society the widespread but groundless belief that woman is inferior to man. The position which the woman lost under the dominance of the Brahmanas [i.e. the literature and the literary tradition which went by that name] had not yet been retrieved. The brahmins of the day evidently showed little sympathy for her sad lot. Altekars describes the position of woman in India at the time as follows: ' The prohibition of Upanayana amounted to spiritual disenfranchisement of women and produced a disastrous effect upon their general position in society. It reduced them to the status of Sudras... What, however, did infinite harm to women was the theory that they were ineligible for them [Vedic sacrifices] because they were of the status of the Sudras. Henceforward they began to be bracketed with Sudras and other backward classes in society. This we find to be the case even in the Bhagavadgita IX.32. [Altekar, A.S., The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, p.204 f.]. In the Manusmṛti we witness the cruel infliction of domestic subservience on woman. The road to heaven is barred to her and there is hard bargaining with her for the offer of an alternative route. Matrimony and obedience to the husband are the only means whereby a woman can hope to reach heaven.

Nasti strinam prthag yagno na vratam napyuposatham patim susrusate yena tena svarge mahiyate. Manu. (V. 153)

Women have no sacrifices of their own to perform Nor religious rites or observances to follow. Obedience to the husband alone would exalt the woman in heaven.

This hostile attitude to woman both in religion and in society was repeatedly criticised and challenged by the Buddha on numerous occasions. In the Kosala

Samyutta the Buddha contradicts the belief that the birth of a daughter was not as much a cause of joy as that of a son, a belief which the ritualism of the Brahmanas had contributed to strengthen. The Buddha pointed out clearly that woman had a dignified and an important part to play in society, and he defined it with great insight, fitting her harmoniously into the social fabric. She is a lovable member of the household, held in place by numerous relationships, and respected above all as the mother of worthy sons. The sex did not matter, he argued, and added that in character and in her role in society, she may even rival men.

Itthi ' pi hi ekacchiya seyya posa janadhipa medhavini silavati sassudeva patibbata. Tassa yo jayati poso suro hoti disampati evam subhagiya putto rajjam ' pi anusasati. (S.I.86)

A woman child, O lord of men, may prove Even a better offspring than a male. For she may grow up wise and virtuous, Her husband's mother rev'rencing, true wife. The boy that she may bear may do great deeds, And rule great realms, yea, such a son Of noble wife becomes his country's guide. Kindred Sayings I. 111

But it is not unusual to find scholars who have missed this singular virtue of Buddhism. It would be grossly unfair to say that the Buddha did not devote much attention to the duties and ideals of lay women or that he showed indifference to or contempt of women. Speaking of Buddhism and Jainism Altekar unjustly says: ' Both these were ascetic religions, and they have not devoted much attention to the duties and ideals of lay women. The founders and leaders of both these movements showed the indifference to, or contempt of women, which is almost universal among the advocates of the ascetic ideal.' [Altekar, A.S. op.cit. p.208]

The instances are numerous where the Buddha defines and describes the duties of woman in society [A.IV. 265ff.]. Further, the Buddha recognises the fact that these by no means constitute the whole of her life. It is not with a view to

limiting their life solely to the secular affairs of the household that the Buddha laid down a code of good living for women, but to serve as a complement to the good life already enjoined in his religion to all his followers, irrespective of their sex. A host of these considerations as they are addressed to women are grouped together in the Samyutta Nikaya in a chapter solely devoted to them as Matugama Samyutta [S.IV.328ff.].

A good lay woman endowed with religious devotion, moral virtue and liberality as well as wisdom and learning, makes a success of her life in this world. For it is said:

*Saddhaya silena ca y ' idha vaddhati pannaya cagena sutena c ' ubhayam.
Sa tadisi silavati upasika adiyati saram idh ' eva attano ' ti. (S. IV. 250)*

Such a virtuous lady who possesses religious devotion, cultivates virtue, is endowed with wisdom and learning, and is given to charity makes a success of her life in this very existence.

Her virtuous character gives to her life in the household poise and dignity [*Pañcahi bhikkhave dhammehi samannāgato mātugāmo visārado agāraṃ ajjhāvasati. Katamehi pañcahi? Pānātipātapaṭivirato ca hoti... surāmeraya-majjapamādaṭṭhānā paṭivirato ca hoti. S. IV. 250*]. The following are also given as virtues endowd with which she can make her life fruitful, both here and hereafter: Saddho [religious devotion], hirima ottappi [sense of shame and fear], akkodhano anupanāhī [not given to anger], anissukī [not jealous], amaccharī [not niggardly], anaticārī [chaste in behaviour], sīlavā [virtuous], bahussuto [learned], āradhaviṛiyo [zealous], upatṭhitassatī [mentally alert], paññavā [wise. Ibid. 243-44]..

We notice that all these virtues enumerated so far are within the reach of a woman living in the household. She is not rooted out of her domestic setting. The good and successful life of the laywoman, as much as of the layman, seems to

have loomed large in the ethics of Buddhism. In the Anguttara Nikaya two sets of virtues are given whereby a woman is said to strive for success in this world as well as in the other : idhalokavijayaya and paralokavijayaya [*Catuhi kho Visākhe dhammehi samannāgato mātugamo idhalokavijayāya paṭipanno hoti ayam sa loko āraddho hoti. Katamehi catūhi? Idha Visākhe mātugāmo susaṃvihitakammanto hoti sangahitaparijjano bhattu manāpaṃ carati sambhataṃ anurakkhati... Catuhi kho Visākhe dhammehi samannāgato mātugāmo paralokavijayāya paṭipanno hoti par ' assa loko araddho hoti. Katamehi catūhi? Idha Visākhe mātugāmo saddhāsampanno hoti sīlasampanno hoti cāgasampanno hoti paññāsampanno hoti. A. IV. 269f.*].

It is also worth noting here that the Buddha accepts the reality and significance of the institution of marriage for woman. But unlike in Hindu society, it was not the only means for the social elevation of woman. In Hinduism, a woman is supposed to become a dvija, a truly initiated member of the religion and the society, only after her marriage [Prabhu - Hindu Social Organisation. p.284].

The virtues referred to in the Anguttara Nikaya [A. IV. 269f] are household duties of a woman as wife which lead to domestic peace and concord. They are also calculated to keep the family administration in gear and secure for the family economic stability. This significant part which she is called upon to play is meticulously defined and it reveals neither indifference to nor contempt of women on the part of the Buddha.

The good laywoman has also her duties for the development of her religious life. It is a course of graduated training which does not conflict with her household life. It is, in fact, smoothly woven into it. Religious devotion [saddha], moral virtue [sila], and a generous disposition [caga], for instance, form part of it. This healthy combination of social and religious virtues of woman is further witnessed in the Anguttara Nikaya where it is said that the following eight virtues pave the way for her to proceed to heaven.

*Susamvhitakammantā sangahitaparijjanā bhattu manāpaṃ carati
sambhataṃ anurakkhati saddhsilena sampannā vadaññū vitamaccharā
niccaṃ maggaṃ visodheti satthanaṃ samparāyikaṃ. Iccete atthadhammā
ca yassa vijjati nāriya tam ' pi sīlavatim āhu dhammaṭṭham saccavādinim
solasakarasampannaṃ atthangasusamāgatam. tādisi sīlavati upāsikā
upapajjati devalokaṃ manāpaṃ. A.IV.271*

These virtues are:

organises the work of the household with efficiency,

1. treats her servants with concern,
2. strives to please her husband,
3. takes good care of what he earns,
4. possesses religious devotion,
5. is virtuous in conduct,
6. is kind,
7. is liberal.

The first four items of this list are identical with the first four of the five good qualities ascribed to the virtuous wife in the Sigalovada Sutta, the fifth being general efficiency [dakkha] and enterprise [analasa sabbakiccesu D.III.190].

It was also held in Indian belief that woman was intellectually inferior to man and therefore had no capacity to reach higher spiritual attainments. This idea clearly echoes in the Samyutta Nikaya where Mara, as the personification of the forces of evil, strives in vain to dissuade a Bhikkhuni from her religious endeavours.

*Yam tam isihi patabbam thanam durabhisambhavam na tam
dvangulapannaya sakka pappotum itthiya. S.I.129.*

No woman, with the two - finger - wisdom which is hers, could ever hope to

reach those heights which are attained only by the sages.

These words of Mara are undoubtedly resonant of the beliefs of the day and the Buddha was vehement in contradicting them. Bhikkhuni Soma to whom Mara addressed these words answered. Illustrating the Buddhist attitude to the spiritual potentialities of woman she said:

Itthibavo kim kayira cittamhi susamahite nanamhi vattamanamhi samma dhammam vipassato. S.I.129

When one's mind is well concentrated and gathered together and wisdom never fails, does the fact of being a woman still make any difference?

However, there is evidence that this age-old scepticism about the spiritual potentialities of woman died hard. Even in the face of success achieved by Bhikkhunis in Buddhism, a groundless belief seems to have prevailed which distrusted the capacity of woman for spiritual perfection. On the eve of her final passing away, when Mahapajapati Gotami visits the Buddha to bid him farewell, he calls upon her to give proof of the religious attainments of the Bhikkhunis in order to convince the disbelieving sceptics, the men in society.

Thinam dhammabhisamaye ye bala vimatim gata tesam ditthipahanattham iddhim dassahi Gotami. Ap.II.535

O Gotami, perform a miracle in order to dispel the wrong views of those foolish men who are in doubt with regard to the spiritual potentialities of woman.

Buddhism, with its characteristic note of realism, also recognises the inherent qualities of woman which make her attractive to the opposite sex. Nothing else in the world, it is said, can delight and cheer a man so much as a woman. In her,

one would find all the fivefold pleasures of the senses. The world of pleasure exists in her.

*Pancakamaguna ete itthirupasmim dissare rupa sadda rasa gandha
potthabba ca amanorama. A.III.69*

All these five-fold pleasures of the senses which gratify the mind are centered in the feminine form.

The power which the woman derives through this may, at the same time, extend so far as to make man throw all reason to the winds and be a pawn in her hand, under the influence of her charm. Thus, it is even possible that a mother may err in relation to her son or vice versa.

*Kin nu kho so bhikkave moghapuriso mannati na mata putte sarajjati putto va
pana matari ' ti. A.III.68*

What, O monks, does that foolish man think that a mother would not feel lustfully attached to her son or the son to his mother?

See Gradual Sayings, III.p.55 where this is incorrectly translated as ' What, monks, knows not this foolish man that a moth shall not lust after her son, nor son, after his mother?'

*N ' aham bhikkhave annam ekarupam ' pi samanupassami evam rajaniyam
evam kamaniyam evam madaniyam evam bandhaniyam evam mucchaniyam
evam antarayakaram anuttarassa yogakkhemassa adhigamaya yathayidam
bhikkhave itthirupam. Itthirupe bhikkhave satta ratta giddha gadhita mucchita
ajjhopanna te digharattam socanti itthirupavasanuga. [A.III.68].*

Therefore a man might say without exaggeration that woman is a trap laid out on all sides by Mara [Yam hi tam bhikkhave samma vadamano vadeyya

samantapaso marassa ' ti matugamam yeva samma vadamano vadeyya samantapaso Marasa ' ti. Ibid.]. These observations are made, however, not as a stricture on their character but as a warning to the men, who in seeking their company, might err on the side of excess. It is true that at times these remarks tend to be overstressed, but obviously with no malice to women. There is pointed reference to the unguarded nature of the man who falls a prey to these feminine charms. These warnings are specifically directed to the mendicants who need to guard themselves against the allurements of the flesh.

Mutthassatim nam bandhanti pekkhitena mhitena ca. Atho ' pi dunnivatthena manjuna bhanitena ca. N ' eso jano svasaddo api ugghatito mato. [A.III.69]

Women ensnare a man of heedless mind with their glances and smiles or with artfulgrooming [dunnivattha] and pleasing words. Women are such that one cannot approach them in safety even though they may be stricken and dead. [Translation at G.S.III.57 is not very accurate.]

Thus it becomes clear that it is not in the spirit of Buddhism to brand woman as a source of corruption for man. Note the words 'a man of heedless mind' in the above quotation. It would be interesting to contrast here the words of Manu who says, 'It is the nature of woman to seduce men in this world': svabhava eva narinam naranam iha dusanam. [Manu.II.213]. The Jains too, inspite of their admission of women into the monastic order, do not seem to have differed very much from the Brahmins in their attitude towards women. The Acaranga Sutra, in the course of a religious admonition known as the Pillow of Righteousness, makes the following comment which stigmatises woman completely. 'He to whom women were known as the causes of all sinful acts, he saw the true state of the world.' [Jaina Sutras I., SBE.XXII, p.81]. The position of woman in Jainism is summed up as follows. "Right in the earliest portions of the Canon woman is looked upon as something evil that enticed innocent males into a snare of misery. They are described as 'the greatest temptation', 'the causes of all sinful

acts', 'the slough', 'demons' etc. Their bad qualities are described in exaggerated terms. Their passions are said to destroy the celibacy of monks 'like a pot filled with lac near fire'." [Deo.S.B.,History of Jaina Monachism, p.493]. In Buddhism, on the other hand, the caution which men are called upon to exercise in their dealings with the opposite sex springs solely from the Buddhist attitude to kama or the pleasures of the senses. Kama are described in Buddhism as leading to grief and turbulence. Kama thwart the path to transcendental happiness. This attitude is eloquently manifest in the counsel given to Arittha in the Alagaddupama Sutta [M.I.130 ff.].

Of this vast field of sense experience of man, sex is only a segment but it is admittedly one with irresistible appeal and thus required a special word of warning, particularly to those who are keen on the pursuit of mental equipoise. The Buddha says that if it were left unbridled, it would, in expressing itself, shatter all bounds of propriety.

He asks ' Does this foolish person think that a mother could not feel lustfully attached towards her son or a son, towards his mother [*Kin nu so bhikkhave moghapuriso mannati na mata putte sarajjati putto va pana matari ' ti. A.III.68*]. Hence the desire to lead a chaste and moral life, eschewing, even completely, the gratification of sex desires, can as much be the aspiration of a woman as of a man. Besides this philosophic attitude to the pleasures of the world in which the woman admittedly plays a dominant part, there seems to be nothing in Buddhism which looks upon sex or woman as being corrupt in themselves.

Thus it becomes clear that the philosophy of early Buddhism had no reservations whatsoever regarding the spiritual emancipation of woman. In the ocean of *samsara* her chances of swimming across to the further shore were as good as those of man. Emancipation of the mind through perfection of wisdom which is referred to as *cetovimutti pannavimutti* was the goal of religious life and for this the way which had proved most effective was the life of renunciation [*agarasma anagariyam pabbajja*]. The woman was as much encumbered by

household life as man and in her spiritual earnestness she would have equally well echoed the words of the man who chooses renunciation. She would say with him that the household life is full of impediments and contrast it with the life of *pabbajja* [*Sambadho gharavaso rajopatho abbhokaso pabbajja*. M.I.179].

But according to the evidence of the Pali texts [A.IV.274 & Vin.II.253] the admission of women into the life of *pabbajja* in Buddhism does not seem to have been effected with as much ease as one would expect. According to these, the Buddha appears to have shown some reluctance to admit women into the Order. When Mahapajapati Gotami [his step-mother who nursed him and nurtured him when his mother passed away seven days after his birth] requested the Buddha to consent to the entry of women into his Order, he is said to have put her off three times, saying: 'Do not be interested O, Gotami, about the entry of women into my Order' [Alam Gotami. Ma te rucci matugamassa tathagatappavedite dhammavinaye agarasma anagariyam pabbajja ' ti. Ibid.].

This does seem to imply that the presence of women in the monastic institution of *brahmacariya* was considered, for some reason or other, to be somewhat problematic. In an atmosphere and in a social setting where women were considered a danger to spiritual life, their presence in the inner circle of religious life as members of the monastic community would have naturally called for serious comment. However, there is evidence that Jainism had already broken through this barrier against women. But the vicissitudes of the Jaina monastic community, in the relations between the two orders of monks and nuns, as well as of nuns and laymen, could not apparently have been very heartening to the Buddha. Speaking of the reforms introduced by Mahavira [the Buddha's senior contemporary of the Jain Order] with the addition of the fifth vow of chastity to the earlier *cauyama samvara* of Parsva, Jacobi says: 'The argumentation in the text presupposes a decay of morals of the monastic order to have occurred between Parsva and Mahavira...' [Jaina Sutras II, SBE.XLV.122. n.3]. There is also evidence from another quarter of the promiscuity in the

behaviour of male and female mendicants [non-Jain] in the Buddha's day. The Buddha takes note of this in the Culladhammasamadana Sutta. He speaks of Samanas and Brahmanas who, repudiating the view that sensual pleasures are detrimental to spiritual progress, mingle freely with female mendicants, vociferously enjoying their company [*Kim su nama te bhonto samanabramana kamesu anagatabhyam sampassamana kamanam pahanam ahamsu kamanam parinnam pannapenti. Sukho imissa paribbajikaya tarunaya mudukaya lomasaya bahaya samphasso ' ti te kamesu patabyatam apajjanti. M.1.305*] These are the observations of the rebellious mendicants.

Whatever can be the basis for pleading for the renunciation of sensual pleasures? What future calamity can lie in wait for us? Saying ' Blissful indeed is the contact of the soft and tender hairy hands of these young female mendicants,' they enjoyed their company.

However, the Buddha concedes to Ananda that women, having taken to the life of pabbajja in Buddhism, are capable of attaining the higher fruits of religious life as far as Arahantship. [*Bhabbo Ananda matugamo tathagatappavedite dhammavinaye agarasma anagariyam pabbajitva sotapattiphalam ' pi sakadagamiphalam ' pi anagamiphalam ' pi arahattaphalam ' pi sacchikatun ' ti. A.IV.276 & Vin.II.254*]. The considerations which seem to have weighed heavy in the mind of the Buddha regarding the admission of women into the Order are concerned more with the wider problem of the monastic organization as a whole. He would have been undoubtedly most averse to stand in the way of the personal liberty of woman. But in the interests of the collective good of the institution of brahmacariya [Institute of Celibacy] which was the core of the religion, women had to make certain sacrifices, surrendering at times even what might appear to have been their legitimate rights. This is evident from the following eight conditions [atthagarudhamma] under which the Buddha granted them permission to enter the Order [Bhikkhuni sasana].

1. A nun who has been ordained even for a hundred years must greet

respectfully, rise up from her seat, salute with joined palms, do proper homage to a monk ordained but that day.

2. A nun must not spend the rains in a residence where there are no monks. [See Bhikkhuni Pac.56: Vin.IV. 313]
3. Every half month a nun should desire two things from the Order of Monks : the asking as to the date of the Observance [uposatha] day, and the coming for the exhortation [bhikkhunovada]. [See Bhikkhuni Pac.59: Vin.IV. 315]
4. After the rains a nun must 'invite' [pavarana] before both Orders in respect of three matters, namely what was seen, what was heard, what was suspected. [See Bhikkhuni Pac. 57: Vin. IV.314]
5. A nun, offending against an important rule, must undergo manatta discipline for half a month before both Orders.
6. When, as a probationer, she has trained in the six rules [cha dhamma] for two years, she should seek higher ordination from both Orders.
7. A Monk must not be abused or reviled in any way by a nun.
8. From today, admonition of monks by nuns is forbidden, admonition of nuns by monks is not forbidden. [Book of the Discipline, V.354-55]

The insistence on these atthagarudhamma is the most vital issue, much more than the delayed consent of the Buddha, in the founding of the Bhikkhuni Sasana. The delay, it may in fact be argued, would have proved useful to emphasise the conditions which he was going to lay down. It is these conditions alone which gave the women access to the monastic life in Buddhism [Sace Ananda Mahapajapati Gotami atthagarudhamme patiganhati sa ' va ' ssa hotu upasampada.Vin.II.255]. The Dharmagupta Vinaya in the Chinese version compares them to a bridge over a great river by means of which one is enabled to cross over to the further bank [Taisho, Vol.22. p.923 B]. These garudhamma are observances which pertain to monastic propriety and procedure in the Order of Bhikkhunis in relation to the Bhikkhus. The women are not to violate these as

long as they remain in the monastic community. In the establishment of the Bhikkhuni Sasana, these conditions seem to have engaged greater attention than even the formulation of the code of moral precepts, which incidentally is not even mentioned at this stage. There is no doubt that in maintaining the vigour and vitality of the Sangha, whether of the Bhikkhus or of the Bhikkhunis, the code of the Patimokkha played a vital part. But it seems to be equally true to say that in bringing the newly inaugurated Bhikkhuni Sangha into a healthy relationship with the older institution of the Bhikkhu Sangha, the atthagarudhamma were calculated to play a greater role. They take no note of moral considerations. A perfect functioning of the latter, in the case of the Bhikkhunis too, was apparently taken for granted at this early stage of their Sasana. That a similar state of affairs did exist even in the Bhikkhu Sangha in its early history is evident in the Kakacupama Sutta [M.I.124].

On a closer examination of the atthagarudhamma we are led to make the following observations. According to these the Bhikkhu Sangha is looked upon as the more mature and responsible body, evidently on account of its seniority [i.e. its earlier establishment], which is capable of leading the way for the Bhikkhuni Sangha. This is clearly evident from the garudhamma 2 and 3 [Vin.II.255]. The Bhikkhunis are expected to recognise the spiritual leadership of the Order of Bhikkhus. At least at the outset, the Bhikkhunis had to seek the assistance of the Bhikkhus in such vital monastic rituals like the Patimokkhuddesa and Bhikkhunovada. But it is also evident that, as circumstances necessitated and experience proved opportune, the Buddha did transfer some of these powers to the Bhikkhunis themselves [Ibid.259]. However, the recognition of the leadership of the monks over the community of nuns and this position of the Bhikkhus in loco parentis to the Bhikkhunis seem to have continued much longer. Even when the authority to recite the Patimokkha by themselves was finally transferred to the Bhikkhunis, the Bhikkhus were still left with the right to instruct them on its proper performance [Anujanami bhikkhave bhikkhuhi bhikkhuninam acikkhitum evam patimokkham uddiseyyatha ' ti. Ibid.].

There is also evidence of a similar reservation of power while effecting the transference of authority to the Bhikkhunis to impose penalties and punishments on their fellow members. The Bhikkhus who carried out these acts at the outset are latterly barred from doing so but are left with the authority to explain to the Bhikkhunis the proper procedure. [*Anujanami bhikkhave bhikkhuhi bhikkhuninam acikkhitum evam kammam kareyyatha ' ti. Vin.II.260*]. In the matter of bhikkhunovada too, it was a Bhikkhu who was appointed to remind the Bhikkhunis regularly of the proper observance of the *atthagarudhamma* [Vin.IV. 51f.]. Thus on account of this complete dependence of a Bhikkhuni on the leadership of a Bhikkhu, the second of these eight *garudhamma* forbade the Bhikkhunis from going into residence for the Rains-Retreat in a place where there were no Bhikkhus. The third *garudhamma* too, implies the reliance of the Bhikkhunis on the Order of Bhikkhus in the performance of the two functions of *uposathapucchaka* and *ovadupasankamana*. Both the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunis seem to have been vigilant about the proper observance of these functions which they considered, no doubt, to be vital for the healthy progress of the newly established Order of nuns. At the first sign of slackness with regard to these there is a storm of protests and we notice that the authorities take immediate action to remedy it. These considerations are brought within the legal framework of the Bhikkhuni Sasana and the failure to observe these come to be declared punishable offences [Ibid. 313,315. See Bhikkhuni Pacittiya 56, 59]. In other words they become part of the Bhikkhuni Patimokkha. In the study of the *sikkhāpada* [i.e. the regulations]of the Bhikkhu Patimokkha, we note this interesting phenomenon of the change over into legal statutes of what were once observed as honoured conventions.

The *garudhamma* 4, 5 and 6 concern themselves with some of the other major items of administration in the Buddhist monastic community, viz. (i) the performance of the pavarana at the end of the rains retreat, (ii) the imposition of necessary penalties on the commission of a grave offence, and (iii) the conferment of upasampda or higher monastic status. As far as the Bhikkhunis

are concerned, they are barred under these garudhamma from performing any of these acts within their own Order of the Bhikkhuni Sangha. These acts of the Bhikkhunis are not considered valid unless they are carried out jointly together with the monks [ubhato sangha].

However, practical considerations soon necessitated amendments to these and we see in the revised version of these conditions the sanction given to the Bhikkhunis to perform these acts, in the first instance, by themselves. Then they are expected to bring their decisions before the Bhikkhu Sangha for ratification. The following is the amended procedure for the conferment of upasampada on a Bhikkhuni by the Bhikkhu Sangha : *Anujanami bhikkhave ekato upasampannaya bhikkhuni- sanghe visuddhaya bhikkhusanghe upasampadan ' ti*. [Vin.II. 271, 274].

It shows that the candidate had been already approved by the Bhikkhuni Sangha. The Bhikkhunis were also allowed to perform their pavarana in two stages before the two assemblies. First among themselves and then before the Bhikkhu Sangha [*Anujanami bhikkhave ajjatana pavaretva aparajju bhikkhusanghe pavaretun ' ti*. Ibid.275].

Thus, from the manner in which the Buddha directed the activities of the Bhikkhunis, it becomes clear that he did realise that as the Bhikkhunis formed a part of the single body of the Sangha, their decisions would affect not only themselves, but also the rest of that vast organization. Hence the Bhikkhus were given the right to advise and assist the Bhikkhunis in their affairs, and thus regulate the destinies of the Sasana. Public opinion must have played a considerable part in bringing Bhikkhunis under the wing of the Bhikkhu Sangha. At any rate, it appears to have been considered wise to have all the important monastic activities of the Bhikkhunis linked up with the more established and senior group of the Bhikkhu Sangha. However, when and wherever this advisory role had to be transferred from the collective organization of the Bhikkhu Sangha to a single individual, the Buddha took every necessary precaution to avoid

possible abuse of privilege.

He has laid down a very comprehensive list of eight requirements which should be satisfied before a monk could be selected to the role of a *bhikkhunovādaka* to give counsel to the congregation of nuns. There seems to be little doubt about his anxiety and his foresight regarding the safety and well-being of the female members of his Order. A monk who is entrusted to preside over their welfare should conform to perfect standards of moral virtue. He should also possess a thorough knowledge of the teaching of the Master and know well the complete code of the Patimokkha covering both the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunis. He should be of pleasant disposition, mature in years and acceptable to the Bhikkhunis, and above all, should in no way have been involved in a serious offence with a Bhikkhuni [Vin.IV.51].

The three remaining garudhamma 1, 7 and 8 appear to have baffled some students of Buddhism as being contrary to the Buddha's general attitude to women. However, if these are examined carefully in their context, this apparent contradiction becomes less glaring. They all strive to see that the Bhikkhunis do not, under any circumstance, assert their superiority over the Bhikkhus. We notice that even in the observance of sikkhapada, the Bhikkhunis are to follow the lead of the Bhikkhus wherever the sikkhapada are common to both groups. The Buddha advises the Bhikkhunis to follow the Bhikkhus in the practice of such sikkhapada [...*yatha bhikkhu sikkhanti tatha tesu sikkhapadesu sikkhatha ' ti*.Vin.II 258]. But referring to the sikkhapada which are peculiar to the Bhikkhunis, he suggests that they should be followed, as they are laid down, according to the letter of the law [...*yathapannattesu sikkhapadesu sikkhatha ' ti*. loc. cit.].

What seems to follow from these words of instruction to the Bhikkhunis is that even if there was a difference between the text of the sikkhapada laid down for the Bhikkhus and their practice at the time, the Buddha did not think it wise, for purposes of communal harmony, to leave room for the Bhikkhunis to be critical of this discrepancy. Such a challenge would have completely undermined

the prestige and the authority of the older institution of the Sangha, quite out of proportion to any degree of moral good it could bring about by the correction of Bhikkhus by the Bhikkhunis.

There is evidence to show that the Buddha was always concerned with the esteem in which the public held his monastic organization. Such a consideration was vital for its existence and prosperity. The first remarks which he made to his erring disciples as he criticised their conduct always pertains to this [*Netam moghapurisa appasannanam va pasadaya pasannanam va bhiiyobhavaya*. Vin.I.58; II.2; III.21,45].

As much as the Buddha wanted his disciples to correct their mistakes and be of faultless conduct he did not want any of them to divulge to any one other than a Bhikkhu or a Bhikkhuni the more serious offences of their fellow members. Such an intimation was allowed only with the approval of the Bhikkhus [*Yo pana bhikkhu bhikkhussa dutthullam apattim anupasampannassa aroceyya annatra bhikkhusammutiya pacittiyam*. Vin.IV.31]. One who violates this injunction is guilty of a Pacittiya offence [Pac. 9].

This provision was undoubtedly made with the best of intentions and should not be misjudged as contributing in any way to the perpetuation of monastic offences. On the other hand, it is in fact repeatedly declared that it is irregular for a monk to conceal intentionally an offence of one member from the rest of the community. Pacittiya 64 of the monks and Parajika 2 and Sanghadisesa 9 of the nuns are all calculated to avoid such a possibility [Vin.IV. 127, 216, 239]. All these precautions, therefore, seem to be a part of a system of internal security set up by the Buddha in the interest of the monastic organization. They emphasise the Buddha's concern both for the public esteem and for the moral soundness of his Order.

There seems to be a general agreement about the fact that the eight garudhamma were laid down by the Buddha as a condition governing the

establishment of the Bhikkhuni Sasana. However, strange as it may seem, after the Bhikkhuni Sasana was instituted under the leadership of Gotami, she appears before Ananda to make the request that the Buddha should remove the first garudhamma and allow Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis to pay courtesies to each other according to seniority alone [Ibid.257-58]. This is hardly accords with the spirit in which Gotami accepted the garudhamma [Ibid.255-56]. We are inclined to think that she was here undoubtedly subjected to the pressure of her own group.

This dissentient and challenging attitude which we find recorded in the Cullavagga does not seem to have found general acceptance elsewhere. Of the Chinese Vinaya texts, it is only the Mahisasakas who record it and that too with a different emphasis [Taisho. Vol.22. p.186 A]. According to their text Gotami, prior to her being ordained, sends Ananda to the Buddha to request him to make this change. The Buddha refuses to do so and says that since he has now allowed women to enter the Order they should follow what has been laid down and not go against it. In the Cullavagga too, the Buddha declines to make this concession. But in trying to give a reason for this attitude of the Buddha, the Theriya tradition attempts to make out that in the organization of the Sasana social considerations, as much as moral and ethical values, loomed large in the mind of the Master. In the Cullavagga he is reported as saying: `Not even the Tittihyas who propound imperfect doctrines sanction such homage of men towards women. How could the Tathagata do so?' [Vin.II.258].

We should also here consider the fact that any concession for the abrogation of what had already been laid down after careful deliberation would be grossly contradictory to the ideal which the Buddha and his early disciples appear to have upheld regarding the observance of the rules and regulations laid down for the guidance of monastic life [Ibid.III.231]. The reply which the Buddha seems to have given to Gotami in the Chinese version of the Mahisasaka Vinaya is definitely more in keeping with this spirit. But we should take note of the fact that

this reply would run contrary to the Theriya tradition, which at some stage, seems to have accommodated the idea that the Buddha conceded the abrogation of the minor rules [D.II.14 & Vin.II.287].

As far as we are aware there is one other Vinaya tradition which records a challenge of the garudhamma. The Chinese version of the Dharmagupta Vinaya has a chapter entitled Bhikkhuni Khandhaka wherein the question is asked whether the Bhikkhunis cannot accuse the Bhikkhus under any circumstances [Taisho Vol. 22, p.927 A]. The Buddha replies to say that they could not do so even if the Bhikkhus violated the rules of discipline or were guilty of offences. These two protests on the part of the Bhikkhunis seem to show that the Bhikkhuni Sangha, or at least a section of it, resisted what it considered to be harsh legislation unfavourable to them.

At the same time one has to view dispassionately the position of the Buddha, who as the head of the Bhikkhu Sangha which was already a well groomed institution, had to safeguard against its disintegration through dispute and discontent. The fifth accusation levelled against Ananda at the First Council, that he agitated for the admission of women into the Order [Vin.II.289], is a clear indication that even after the recognised success of the Bhikkhuni Sasana [Apadana II.535, v. 79] there was a section of the Bhikkhus who formed as it were a consolidated opposition against it. The motive for such an attitude could have been generated by the fear of being eclipsed by the newer Order. The Chinese version of the Mahisasaka Vinaya includes a statement which is ascribed to the Buddha which seems to lend support to this assumption. The Buddha says that if there were no Bhikkhunis in the Sasana, then after his death the male and female lay-devotees [upasaka and upasika] would have honoured the Bhikkhus in diverse ways. But now that the Bhikkhunis had entered the Order it would not happen so [Taisho Vol.22, p.186 B].

It is difficult here to decide how and why the presence of Bhikkhunis in the Sasana brought about such a radical change in the attitude of laymen and

laywomen towards the Bhikkhus. Why were the Bhikkhus deprived of the honour that would have been theirs had not the Bhikkhunis appeared on the scene? Are the Bhikkhunis to be held responsible for the loss of prestige of the Bhikkhus? At any rate, this record of the Mahisasakas was undoubtedly representative of the opinion of the day regarding the Bhikkhuni Sasana.

The Pali records of the Theriya tradition which belong to an earlier phase of the history of the Sāsana⁶ give expression to a similar feeling in the chastisement of Ananda in whom ultimately lay the responsibility for the admission of women into the Order. An echo of this is felt in the Mahisāsaka Vinaya where Ananda apologises to the Buddha for having requested him to permit women to enter the Order. But the Buddha absolves him saying that he did so unwittingly under the influence of Māra (Taisho Vol.22 p.186 A) The Theriya tradition is not alone again in expressing the fact that the presence of women in the Sasana would reduce its life span by half. We find it recorded in the Chinese version of the Dharmagupta Vinaya that the Buddha told Ananda that if women did not enter the Order it would have lasted 500 years longer (ibid.p.923 C. See also Vin.II.256)

It becomes clear from what has been said so far that at the time of crystalization of Theriya traditions two ideas regarding the establishment of the Bhikkhunī Sāsana stood out clearly. A section of the Bhikkhu Sangha was reproachful of Ananda because he interceded with the Buddha for the sake of the bhikkhunīs. The admission of women was also considered a categorical danger to the successful continuance of the Sasana. In the light of all this evidence a study of the garudhammā reveals to us the fact that the Buddha was keenly conscious of the need to steer clear of the possible rivalries of the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunīs and maintain healthy and harmonious relations between the two groups.

(5) Happiness

- As seen in Buddhist perspective

Dictionaries are generally agreed in referring to happiness as being characterized by or showing pleasure or contentment. Buddhism as a world religion has an unbeatable record of having been through more than twenty-five centuries, living very illustriously, winning over more or less the whole of Asia from the Caspian Sea up to the Japanese Archipelago. The cultural enrichment of the people of the lands over which Buddhism spread, Afghanistan, Iran and Persia in western Asia and China, Korea and Japan in the east is eloquent evidence of the more than divine elegance of Buddhism as a religion which serves mankind. Ancient historians like Al Biruni who lived more than a thousand years ago have left behind for our benefit astonishing records of these. Hence we make bold to attempt to view and examine the concept of happiness from the Buddhist perspective.

Let it be first declared that in this study it is the Pali word *sukha*[= happiness] which gives us our sense of direction. We do not wish to drift away from scriptural authority and speculate with unlimited freedom. We would consider supersonic flights in the area of religion both by scholars and writers in general, whether it relates to the study of its teachings or to their practice, to be both unhealthy and disruptive. Happiness primarily connotes a state of mind and Buddhist thinking looks upon it as operating in or having its genesis in both the physical and mental planes [*sukhan ' ti dve sukhāni kāyikañ ca sukhaṃ cetasikañ ca sukhaṃ*. Ps. 1.188]. This same text, the Paṭisambhidāmagga offers us some very insightful comments about both these categories of happiness or *sukha*. In both cases, happiness results from getting what one wishes for or seeks after. The Pali word which connotes this is *sāta* which means 'wished for' or 'gained' [Cp. Monier Williams Sanskrit English Dictionary p. 1196 coloumn 3]. This word is often used as equivalent to and paired with *piya*[=dear or pleasant] as in *yam*

loke piyarūpaṃ sātārūpaṃ [D.II.304].

Note here the beautiful comment on this in the Atthakatha [*Yaṃ loke piyarūpaṃ sātārūpan ' ti yaṃ lokasmiṃ piyasabhāvañ c ' eva madhurasabhāvañ ca. Cakkhuṃ loke ' ti ādisu lokasmiṃ hi cakkhādisu mamattena abhiniviṭṭhā sattā sampattiyam patitṭhitā attanā paṭiladdhāni catusamuṭṭhānika-gandhārammanādīni kass ' aññassa evarūpāni atthī ' ti maññanti. Tesam evam maññamānānaṃ tāni cakkhādīni piyarūpāni c ' eva sātārūpāni ca honti . Atha nesam tattha anuppannā c ' eva taṇhā uppajjati uppannā ca taṇhā punappunaṃ pavattivasena nivisati. DA. III. 800*].

Here are a few observations on the above Commentarial note. The things of the world which are capable of stimulating our sense organs and generating happiness within us are said to possess these two virtues of being 'delightful ' [*piyasabhāva*] and ' tasteful ' [*madhurasabhāva*]. The world being what it is, it is we who need to be watchful in our reactions to it. People of the world are said to get into the wrong track in their relations with the world of sense experience when they let their sense of ego enter into their world of thinking [*mamattena abhiniviṭṭhā*]. A further aberrant stage of thinking is detected wherein one does, through the already expanding sense of arrogance, feel that happiness is the exclusive privilege of each individual, shutting out as it were every other person [*Kass ' aññassa evarūpāni atthī ' ti. = Who else has such things as these?*]

A further keen observation is made in differentiating two stages or two states as categories of physical and mental happiness. One is at the production level of happiness, in the very process of genesis when it is referred to as *sukhā vedanā*, i.e. sensing or experiencing happiness [both physical and mental : *kāyasamphassajā cetosamphassajā sātā sukhā vedanā*]. The other is at the product level, i.e. on the completion of the process when it is referred to as *sukhaṃ vedayitaṃ*, i.e. sensed or experienced happiness : *kāya-samphassa-jaṃ sātāṃ sukhaṃ vedayitaṃ* [Ps. I.188]. At the mundane level of worldly existence, herein lies the joy of living or the happiness which the senses provide in their

communication with the outside world. This happiness [*sukhaṃ somanassaṃ*] is indicated as the gratification through the senses or *kāmānaṃ assādo* [*Yaṃ kho bhikkhave ime pañcakāmaguṇe paticca uppijati sukhaṃ somanassaṃ kāmānaṃ assādo*. M. I. 85]. This position is philosophically viewed as being very restricted or circumscribed in the production of genuine states of happiness [*Appassādā kāmā vuttā bhagavatā...* M.1.132]. Such forms of happiness are relatively so because they bring in their wake considerable stress and strain and untold bitterness and dissatisfaction [...*ādinavo ettha bhiyyo*. See further M.I.132]. Buddhism never denies the existence and the experiencing by man of different forms and levels of happiness. But at the same time it stresses the importance of making a realistic and relative estimation of such happiness in relation to the price that a man of the world has to pay for its purchase.

Granting the possibility of enjoying happiness at the down to earth mundane level in terms of material considerations, Buddhism envisages a very pragmatic and at the same time an ethically exalted and blameless plane of happiness for the man of the world. The Anguttara Nikaya [A.II.69] makes a beautiful analysis and examination of this situation. Fulfilment of material needs, starting from food and raiment [*ghāsaṃcchādāna-paramatā* at D.1.60 & M.1.360] is a basic requirement of all mankind. People must have these things of daily need up to a satisfactory degree to prevent them suffer from want. Or they must have the means whereby to acquire them. This first situation is referred to as the happiness of possession or *atthisukha*. It is a reminder to the world of today that the Buddha who appeared in the world so back in history, over two and a half millennia ago, was fully alive to the problem of the haves and the have-nots, and that he entrusted its solution to man and to man alone to labour and toil for their production and acquisition and to regulate their equitable and justifiable distribution. And this, without exploitation and with a socially desirable large-heartedness.

Thus while possession implied one form of happiness or *atthisukha*, non-

possession of means [*assako anāḥhiko*], i.e. poverty spells unhappiness. The Pali word used for this lack or deficiency of basic needs of existence, which is the state of poverty, is *dāḷiddiya*. The unhappiness resulting from poverty or non-possession is *dukkhaand* as its opposite the word *sukhais* used to refer to the happiness resulting from possession [i.e. *atthisukha*]. This is the rule with regard to the man of the world that he must have the means to supply himself with the needs in order that he may not to be plunged in a state of unhappiness.

Buddhist thinking refers to this very positively and specifically, saying 'To the pleasure seeker of the world, poverty indeed is painful' [*Dāḷiddiyam bhikkave dukkhaṃ lokasmiṃ kāmabhogino*. A.III. 351 f.]. On the other hand, it is no secret that the true aspirant to the goal of Nibbana in Buddhism finds that for him it is the rule to renounce [*nekkhama, paṭinissagga, apacaya* etc.]. Total non-possession is his primary source of happiness. [*Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma yesaṃ no natthi kiñcanaṃ*. Dh. v. 200]. But as a man of the world he finds that it is possessions [bhoga] which provide him with his physical and mental happiness and satisfaction [*Idha gahapati ariyasāvako uṭṭhāna-viriyādhigatehi bhogehi bāhābala-paricitehi sedāvakkhittehi dhammikehi dhammaladdhehi attānaṃ sukheti pīṇeti sammā sukhaṃ pariharati*. A.III.45]. This means that happiness has to be acquired, whether it be for one's own sake or for the sake of others, righteously and correctly and with injury to none. The means must be acquired on justifiable grounds [*dhammikehi dhammaladdhehi bhogehi*].

Whichever way one looks at happiness, whether with a philosophical sobriety and a meaningful level-headedness as indicated above or not, the human mind is attracted towards happiness [*sukha*] and is repelled by its opposite [*dukkha*]. Associated with the desire to live and to avoid death is the desire to be happy and avoid unhappiness [*jīvitukāmā amaritukāmā sukhakāmā dukkhapaṭikkulā*. D.II. 330]. But herein comes the Buddhist standpoint towards happiness which is precise and totally uncompromising. The Buddha very clearly states in the Mahasaccaka Sutta that happiness, to be acceptable and premissible, has to be

free from lustful stains and sinful blemishes [*Na kho ahaṃ tassa sukhasa bhāyāmi yaṃ taṃ sukhaṃ aññatr ' eva kāmehi aññatra akusalehi dhammehi*. M.I.247]. This immediately implies the existence, in terms of Buddhist thinking, of unacceptable grades of happiness which share of the nature of lust [kāma] and evil [*akusala dhamma*].

There is also a reckoning of grades of happiness as superior or inferior, of higher and lower quality even within the same permissible area. While at a mundane, down to earth level a comparably lower level of happiness satisfies an average worldling, the religio-intellectual maturity which accompanies spiritual development of man in Buddhism makes him opt for the higher grades of happiness which are both permitted and recommended within the framework of transcendental [*lokuttara*] growth in Buddhism. The Buddha in the Mahasaccaka Sutta as quoted above, indicates the permissible areas within which a Buddhist may legitimately seek his quota of happiness [...*yaṃ taṃ sukhaṃ aññatra kāmehi aññatra akusalehi dhammehi* M.I. 247]. This search for happiness, a man of the world is presumed to be doing all the time, with legitimacy or otherwise [*attano sukhaṃ esāno*. Dh. v. 132.]

Buddhism also envisages spiritually higher grades of happiness which relatively reduce, without the batting of an eyelid, the worth of worldly happiness to a mere zero. This is the implication of the venerable Maha Kassapa's observations about the joy and happiness he gets from a true comprehension of the Truth or dhamma as against his reaction to the melodies of super grade orchestral music.

*Na pañcaṃgikena turiyena - rati me hoti tādīsī
yathā ekaggacittassa - sammā dhammaṃ vipassato*. Thag. v. 1071

I derive not so much joy and delight from the strains of music of the fivefold orchestra as much as I do when I grasp, with a mind deeply concentrated, the truths of the sublime teaching.

The life of the man of the world is a reality which Buddhism reckons with. The exalted character of the sensory reactions to the stimuli of the world as reflected here in the character of Maha Kassapa Thera does not necessarily imply a total ban on them to the man of the world. The Buddhist stress is on the fact that life in the world and all else associated with it [i.e. everything besides and below Nibbana], are conditioned things [i.e. *samkhata*] having the characteristic of *anicca dukkha anatta* or of being transient, unsatisfactory and essenceless.

In the religious idealism of Buddhism, both a realization of this position and acting in accordance with it are insisted on. This is beautifully reflected in the story of young Dighavu in the Samyutta Nikaya [S. V. 344 f.]. The Buddha himself is seen personally giving him this new vision of life in the world and pointing out to him the way to release therefrom. The vitality and vibrancy of this exposition as a totally effective religious way compels us to produce it here in the original Pali. We consider it to be one of the finest examples of experiential religious culture, effected and recorded almost in the company of the Buddha.

Tasmāt ' iha tvaṃ Dīghāvu imesu catusu sotāpattiṃgesu patitṭāya cha vijjābhāgiye dhamme uttariṃ bhāveyyāsi. Idha tvaṃ Dīghāvu sabba-samkhāresu aniccānupassī viharāhi anicce dukkhasaññī dukkhe anattasaññī pahānasaññī virāgasaññī nirodhasaññī ' ti. Evaṃ hi te Dīghāvu sikkhitabban ' ti. [S. V. 345].

To the Buddhist, the state which is the opposite of this samsāric state, i.e the unconditioned [or *asamkhata*] state of Nibbana is equally a reality. Nibbana is the logical opposite of samsāra and for that very reason it is no more than the reality of the non-existence of a state of painful processes of grasping and thereby incurring more and more continuance of this life process, and consequently inheriting birth, decay and death [*upādānapaccayā bhavo bhavapaccayā jāti jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇam. S.II. 1*]. One is doubtful whether the oft-quoted

passage from the Udāna [Ud. 80 f.] implies a factual existence of such a state beyond death [*Yasmā ca kho bhikkhave atthi ajātaṃ abhutaṃ akataṃ asaṃkhataṃ tasmā jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṃkhatassa nissaraṇam paññāyatī ' ti. Ibid.*]. The total and tremendous reality of Nibbana with a down to earth fullness, from the time of one's release [i.e. becoming a vimuttacitta] to the point of material and consequent psychic break up in death, precludes us from making any attempts to stretch any form of existence relating to Nibbana beyond this. The Alagaddupama Sutta sees very clearly the liberation of the liberated being [*vimuttacittaṃ bhikkhuṃ*] in this form. He is released and is beyond all arrest and all apprehension [*ananuvejjo*].

Evaṃ vimuttacittaṃ kho bhikkhave bhikkhuṃ sa-indā devā sa-brahmakā sa-pajāpatikā anvesaṃ nādhigacchanti idaṃ-nissitaṃ tathāgatassa viññāṇan ' ti. Taṃ kissa hetu. Diṭṭhe ' vā ' ham bhikkhave tathāgataṃ ananuvejjo ' ti vadāmi. [M.I.140].

The Kevaddha Sutta speaks of this final termination of the saṃsāric being in Nibbana as follows:

*Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ - anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ.
Ettha āpo ca pathavī ca -tejo vāyo na gādhati.
Ettha dīghañ ca rassañ ca - anuṃ thūalaṃ subhāsubhaṃ.
Ettha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca - asesam uparujjhati.
Viññāṇassa nirodhena - etth ' etaṃ uparujjhati. [D.I. 223].*

His [the Arahant ' s] Consciousness is undemonstrable and without terminus. It is radiant on all sides. Neither water nor earth, heat nor wind does ever find a footing here. Notions of long or short, great or small, good or bad exist not here. Psycho-physical components of body totally cease to be. On the cessation of Consciousness all that is of here would cease to be.

This declaration by the Buddha to Kevaddha, the householder 's son, implies an unquestionable totality of cessation in Nibbana. Buddhism sees no contradiction in prescribing in this manner, within its specific dimensions, for what would be deemed the ultimate happiness for the man of the world. It is for the man who seeks to know truly what life in the world means [*Yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*]. Therefore the Buddhist has to invariably look upon Nibbana as the highest attainable happiness [*Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*]. It is the highest in terms of what he chooses to leave behind [*māradheyyaṃ*] or has to reject [*pahātave*. See Dhp.v. 34]. Nibbana is so because it is the highest point of total dispossession [*nekkhammūpasame ratā* Dhp.v. 181 = delighting in the tranquilly brought about through total relinquishment.]. It is dispossession of all those which stand in the way of true happiness, and the Dhammapada sums it up in no uncertain terms when it says:

Happily indeed do we live, we who have nothing as our own. Nothing by way of impediments to spiritual progress, and to final release and liberation from all things of the world.

Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma

yesaṃ no natthi kiñcanaṃ. Dhp. v. 200

(6) God At The Head Of Religion

- A search through Buddhism

Now it is not the time for the great religions of the world to be disputing, down here on earth about the identity of the kingdom of heaven above. Conceptually, there is unanimity and agreement that these two concepts of life on earth and the kingdom of heaven above must be spanned. It is widely felt and universally recognized that the human situation as we witness it down here on earth and in our midst is not an ideal situation for man to be in, or much less to opt to continue

therein, life after life. However, the results of such reckoning as to the value and worth of life of man on earth widely vary through the history of religions and civilizations.

Man's Inheritance and Expectations

Insecurity on account of disease and death appears to have disturbed man almost from the beginnings of life on earth, when much less was known about the human body, its health and pathology. For example, prayers for freedom from disease, decay and death were addressed by early Vedic Aryans in India, at a period far removed from ours by anything more than even five millennia. They were addressed to greater powers of non-terrestrial origin in whom they had begun to believe and trust and with whom they had cultivated relationships of varying intensity and intimacy. Several passages in Vedic literature, including the Rgveda and the Atharvaveda [Rv.VI.74.4, VII.88.7 ; Av.II.10.1, IV.16.6], refer to god Varuna as responsible for inflicting men with the then much dreaded disease dropsy as a punishment for sin. This role assigned to the gods comes from the desire of men that the gods should safeguard the moral order among men. Together with god Mitra, god Varuna is said to be a dispeller, hater and punisher of falsehood. Together they afflict with disease those mortals who neglect their worship:

The folk, O Mitra-Varuna, who hate you, who sinfully hating pour you no libations,
Lay in their hearts, themselves, a wasting sickness, whereas
The righteous gaineth all by worship. [Rv.I.122.9].¹

Beneath this mantle of moral guardianship, helplessly assigned by man to powers believed to be divine, one sees the morbid tones of vindictiveness and revenge, revealing unwittingly the creation [by man himself] of the gods in the

¹ See Macdonnell, Vedic Mythology. pp.26 ff.

image of man. Gods Indra and Varuna, as guardians of human progeny in such situations, feature prominently in the Vedic religion of India. A greater degree of domesticity and intimacy is seen in a prayer addressed to the Guardian of the Homestead [Vastospati Rv.VII.54], to keep away disease and decay:

O Guardian of the Homestead: bring no disease, and give us happy entrance.

May we ever-youthful in thy friendship: be pleased in us as in his sons a father.....

Protect our happiness in rest and labour. Preserve us evermore, ye Gods, with blessings.

Likewise, prayers are offered to god Varuna requesting that the life of the worshipper be spared and safeguarded:

Let me not yet, King Varuna, enter into the house of clay. Have mercy, Spare me, Mighty Lord. [Rv.VII.89.1]

Extra-Paternal Protection

These failings like decay and disease of body, as well as declining material fortunes of man on the one hand, and the fury of a hostile world in storms, floods and earthquakes on the other, together with the wrath of enemies, made man turn towards a power beyond himself. Looking upon the world as a larger home, he wanted a second father to safeguard his place therein and provide for his physical needs and mental security. Thus man began to learn to pray for better fortunes here and for a better life beyond this. It is primarily towards the achievement of both these ends that man turned in the direction of the superhuman and the divine and submitted himself to a way of life which could thereafter be termed religious, more so for its fear of the divine than for its moral tones which serve the weal and welfare of mankind. What was believed to be beyond human ken and human power was inevitably placed in the realm of the superhuman [Godly or divine]. On the other hand, it did not require a penetrative intellect of a very high order to become convinced of the recurrently discovered

inadequacy and inefficiency of human life. These failings, at the human level, although partially relieved or believed to be relieved from time to time, continued to be lamentably irremediable.

The Buddhist Vision

The Buddhists too, start by unhesitatingly declaring the human situation as being far from satisfactory. There is no uncertainty whatsoever in the teachings of Gotama the Buddha, that the highest bliss of man and his highest attainment lie in his transcendence of the mundane. Thus the term *lokuttara* has come to be used in Buddhist texts to refer to everything transcendentally supreme. As a religion, Buddhism recognizes the limitations and frailties of the human life. Decay, disease and death derive from the purely physical basis of life. Greed, hatred, enmity and jealousy with consequent states of frustration and bitterness, emanate from within man and are not inflicted from without. In themselves they constitute no evil which exists in the world, outside and independent of man. They are on account of man, generated and perpetrated by him. Buddhism's cardinal theme of *dukkha* [Skt. *duhkha*] or unsatisfactoriness of life, emerges from these observations. The unflinching law of constant change or *anicca* [Skt. *anitya*], together with the consequent truism of the absence of an abiding and enduring substance which is generally rendered as soullessness or *anatta* [Skt. *anātman*], form the cornerstones of the philosophy of early Buddhism whose main burden has been the suffering [*dukkha*] of man and the unsatisfactoriness of the world in which he finds himself [*anicca*].

Thus the religious message of Buddhism invariably deals with the cessation or termination [nirodha] of this suffering or dukkhanirodha which is the most comprehensive definition of the Buddhist goal of nibbāna [Skt. nirvāṇa]. It is to be noted that thus from the point of view of salvation, the emphasis has come to be laid at this end, i.e. on the termination of suffering or unsatisfactoriness of life, visibly experienced at this down-to-earth level. Gotama, or more accurately speaking Siddhartha Gautama, in his early years as Bodhisattva, i.e. the Buddha

Aspirant or Buddha-to-be, was rightly vexed with the problem of the origin of this unsatisfactoriness associated with life. The question has often been asked, as repeatedly recorded in the Buddhist texts, whether the responsibility for this lies with an outside agency, a power beyond man [param̐ kataṃsukhadukkhaṃS.II.19,22]. This appears to have been the general run of religious inquiry, as we have already shown above with reference to ancient India, and perhaps has been elsewhere too. It was a searching probe into this, namely the why and the wherefore of the presence of unsatisfactoriness in human life, [not of evil as existing in the world, outside man] which brought out the second of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, i.e., the Truth relating to the origin of dukkha or Samudayasacca. The very reckoning with the existence of unsatisfactoriness in the life of man, as referred to above, constitutes the first or the primary truth of dukkha [Dukkhasacca].

The Point of Departure

It is here at this point, on the analysis and explanation of the unsatisfactory nature of life, that Buddhism appears to part ways with the other widely prevalent religious systems of the world. The Buddha's analysis of the problem of the unhappiness of man proceeds on the basis of an analysis of the causal genesis of unhappiness. Thus his view proceeds from what is known and observable in the world of man rather than from seeking an agent or mediator outside the world of man. According to him, whosoever being outside the world of man was powerful enough to operate within the world of man and have an impact on him, had in turn to be impacted by it. Taking up the contemporary theological assumption of his day in India that the Great Brahma is supreme in the Thousand-World-System [*sahassī lokadhātu*] and presides over it, the Buddha argued that the Great Brahma must then also be subject to the laws that govern this world system, namely that he must himself be subject to change [*Yāvatā bhikkhave saḥassī lokadhātu Mahābrahmā tattha aggaṃakkhāyati. Mahābrahmuno 'pi atth 'eva aññatattaṃatthi vipariṇāmo. A.V.59-60*]. Far from conceding the manipulation of the affairs of the world of man to a power or

person from outside, the Buddha sought to locate the source of changes in the world of man, both physical and mental, within the very conditions which shape human existence. Thus while the Buddhists share with most of the major religions of the world the aspiration to transcend the mundane, they have clearly maintained this distinctness of the teachings of Gotama, the Buddha of the sixth century B.C. In its early Indian form, as well as in the form preserved in the Theravada tradition, this anthropocentric bias has been upheld. They strictly maintain that the world of man is without refuge from outside and a supreme power who or which guides its destinies [*Attāṇo loko anabhissaro*. M.11.68].

These basic points of Buddhist thinking do certainly make Buddhism appear to be different from most of the other religions of the world. But this lack of uniformity is in itself no cause for lament. It does not leave Buddhism in a vacuum. It only implies a different approach to a problem and a different analysis and investigation of it. But some have criticized, and we regret too hastily, Buddhism on this point. The following comment made by one such critical analyst may be noted in passing:

' The development of mankind in our present time urges the Buddhists also to reconsider their way and to take history seriously. They can no longer exclude the social dimension from their system. World peace, without which even personal liberation remains impossible, can be established only if mankind forms a unity, a community in which every individual is considered as a being of infinite value and equal rights. Such a community can be formed only if the love of God frees men from their egoism and inspires them with self-giving love.'²

The Burden of Buddhism

The Buddha was essentially a religious leader, one whose major concern was to help man to relieve himself of this suffering. By starting more from the

² Theobald Diedrich in *Religious Dialogue and Human Development - The Asian Scene*. [Sri Lanka Foundation Institute Pocket Book 2, 1978],

core than from the periphery, he selects his specific areas of activity and confines himself to those alone. In fact, he refuses to be dragged into arguments and discussions which do not relate to this problem of the salvation of man. For example, he resisted ontological problems which relate to cosmology. In one of the widely known discourses of the Majjhima Nikaya, the Culamalunkya Sutta, the Buddha makes this position of his very clear.

' That the world is eternal has not been explained by me, Malunkyaputta; that the world is not eternal... And why, Malunkyaputta, has this not been explained by me? It is because it is not connected with the goal, is not fundamental to the Brahma-faring,³ and does not conduce to turning away from, nor dispassion, stopping, calming, super knowledge, awakening nor to nibbana... .' [MLS. II. 101].

His main mission is the clarification of the unsatisfactoriness of the life of man [*Dukkhañ cā 'ham paññāpemi*] and an enunciation of a way for its eradication [*dukkhassa ca nirodham* M.I.140]. This is reiterated in the Malunkya Sutta as follows: "And what has been explained by me...This is the course leading to the stopping of anguish,⁴ has been explained by me" [MLS.II.101]. It is with perfect awareness of his field of activity that the Buddha says that he visualises the world to be within the fathom-sized body of man [*Api cā 'ham āvuso imasmiṃ yeva byāmamatte kalebare saññimhi samanake lokañ ca paññāpemi lokasamudayañ ca lokanirodhañ ca lokanirodhagāminim paṭipadañ ca*. A.II.48]. If that is properly corrected, then all other matters correct themselves consequently. Hence the Buddha's promulgation of the Causal Genesis or Paṭiccasamuppāda is primarily in relation to the presence, origination and elimination of the unsatisfactory life processes of man. His main line of inquiry was ' what being there does this naturally unsatisfactory human life process

³ This refers to the Buddhist religious life, specially of the mendicant, and known as brahmacarya. It has nothing to do with Brahman or Brahma of pre-Buddhist Indian religions.

⁴ Here, the translator uses the word anguish to refer to dukkha which we explain as 'unsatisfactoriness of life'.

come to be perpetuated ' [kismiṃ sati idaṃ hoti.]. It is a question, an inquiry and an analysis relating to a specific problem. It is the answer to these questions and the ways recommended for their solution which gave rise to a total and comprehensive religious system which has come to be designated today as Buddhism.

Unity and Dignity of Man

Having thus analysed the plight of man in the world in terms of his samsaric inheritance at birth,⁵ i.e. as a product of his own correct or incorrect action through thought, word and deed, and scanning the extent to which man finds himself in the grip of his environment, the Buddha saw no justification for laying the responsibility for the suffering of man in the hands of a Supreme Being or a God, who at the same time is credited with the magnanimity of creation. Not only does the Buddha, through his theory of Causal Genesis, eliminate the role of an external agency and the process of creation, but he also highlights the contradiction between the benevolence of creation and the painful presence of suffering in the world.

Thus in place of fear and dread which come in the wake of a concept of sin and transgression and in place of submission which follows from authoritarianism of creation and redemption, Buddhism starts with the culture and development of man and the elevation of his personal dignity. A first step in this direction is the insistence on the cultivation of the virtue of mettā [Skt. *maitrī* = love] or the practice of universal loving kindness. It is basically the state of friendliness, of being a friend or mitra that links man to man in society. It is a process which eliminates hostility [*a + vyāpādaanda + vihiṃsā*]. It is a virtue which expects nothing back in return. It is no doubt extended to all grades of life, human and animal and further extends through time and space, leaving no room anywhere

⁵ For example, the psycho-physical complex, manifest or latent, in which human beings find themselves at birth or later in life, and produced for them on account of their own conscious, volitional activity or karma.

for caste, creed, race or ethnic differences. It is in fact interesting to observe that the future Buddha, on whom the salvation of the present world is said to be hinged, is named *Maitreya* or Unlimited Universal Loving Kindness. This insists, as it were, that the salvation of man rests entirely on the mutual love and respect for one another.

Far from harping on petty ideological differences within creeds, man must learn to respect man in his own right and in spite of differences and disagreements. Nothing short of such a down-to-earth and meaningful system of values can stop the carnage that is being embarked upon and enacted, day after day, on the basis of religion, race, colour and creed. And friendliness or *maitrī* is increasingly more needed, equally within groups as much as between groups.

Society and Moral Order

The Buddhists are thus required to look upon humanity with a sense of unity, working towards the goal of eliminating one another's stress and turmoil which result from the misguided and miscalculated behaviour of each one. It is not their mission to propagate a creed, in response to a divine will or requirement, and to win over the rest of mankind to their side. The virtues they uphold, both for self-redemption and for the welfare of mankind, have a universal applicability. They are directly and intimately connected with human nature. Through a process of self-education Buddhists are expected, for this purpose, to regulate their lives by refraining from certain types of behaviour which are personally and psychologically corroding and socially and externally disruptive and damaging. The deterrent in these cases is a healthy and constructive value-awareness, rather than a fear which represses and inhibits.

In the field of Buddhist morality, two basic considerations which regulate social behaviour are:

1. An awareness of what degrades and contaminates human life [hīrō or a sense shame].

2. An awareness of what damages and endangers its futherance [ottappa or a sense of fear].

These are described as regulative factors which put the world on the right and the bright track [*Dve ' me bhikkhave sukkā dhammā lokam pārenti*. See A.1.51]

The value of these restraints which are sponsored by Buddhism in its religious ethics lies in their cohesive power of integrating society into a harmonious whole on a basis of mutual respect which is directly reciprocal on the human plane, deriving its validity at grass-root level. As far as the Buddhists are concerned, more than any other virtue, *maitrī* or loving-kindness, reaches farthest in this direction. It is an unflinching stimulus to ego-reduction. According to Buddhism, egoism in the form of the assertion of I and mine [i.e. *ahaṃkāra mamīṃkāra mānānusaya*] stands very much in the way of salvation. A lift-off from *saṃsāra* to *nirvāṇa* cannot and does not take place in its presence. This is why we are told that the primary entry into the path leading to Nirvana, i.e. the state of *sotāpanna* begins with the elimination of this egoism of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*.

The mutual character of the virtue of *maitrī* also develops benevolent affection leading to a spirit of giving and sharing [*dāna*, *dānasamvibhāga* and *cāga* of the Buddhist texts] which is a much needed virtue in the world of today and tomorrow, where imbalances of resources as well as of production will continue to prevail indefinitely, exposing man to risks of poverty and starvation, of haves and have-nots. Practised with adequate seriousness at an individual level, it must necessarily penetrate into the psychology of nations at a group level. Buddhists who are prompted by *maitrī* to contribute towards the very basis of sustenance and consequently of peace and comfort of their fellow beings, could not generate thoughts of destruction through wars or quarrels with rival groups nor within their own.

The no-God Stand

This brief introduction to the basic tenets of Buddhism which give Buddhism its distinctness with regard to the rejection of a Creator God who presides over the world he has created and contrives for the redemption of the worldlings whose lot has come to be suffering both in mind and body, was mainly intended to emphasize the non-traditionalist character of the religion of the Buddha in its historical beginnings. One of the basic recognitions in early Buddhism about the nature of the world, as already outlined, is its view of unsatisfactoriness with regard to the experience of man living in it. The physical inheritance of man at birth, according to Buddhism, brings in its wake and by virtue of it, a host of unpleasant and unwelcome situations like disease and decay, not to speak of death at a time when it is least expected. While they harass man in the physical sphere, a complicated network of psychological aberrations like greed, hatred, jealousy and pride keep bombarding him all the time, from birth to death. This view of the sources of suffering stands in opposition to a view of a Supreme Being who both has control over unwelcome and unpleasant situations or could provide succour in relation to them [Attāṇo loko anabhissaro M.II.68].

In this context it must be adequately stressed that no serious student of Buddhism could afford to miss the significance of the two Pali words *tāṇaand anabhissara* which are embedded in the above quotation. The word *tāṇa* means protection, shelter, refuge and in its negative *attāṇa*, what is asserted is the absence of such a source of comfort or security for suffering worldlings, external to themselves. Bring into this context now the Buddha's oft-repeated injunction: 'Be ye your own refuge. Provide for yourself your own security. Seek it not from another. Seek it and find it in the Dharma.' [*Attadīpā bhikkhave viharatha attasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā dhammadīpā dhammasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā*. D.II.100]. *Abhissara*, on the other hand, even more than the Sanskrit word *Isvara* which means over-lord, Supreme Being or God, with the prefix *abhi-* added to it, means a deity presiding over and controlling the destiny of the world. The concept of its negative in *anabhissara* fits in harmoniously with the Buddhist theory of Causal

Genesis as far as the life of man is concerned. On this Causal Genesis alone depends the life process of man in *saṃsāra*, positively in his forward journey of continuance [...*paccayā...paccayā*]. Negatively, the salvation of man in Nirvana depends on its reversal [...*nirodhā... nirodhā*].

As for the authenticity of the quotation which we have discussed so far and which is given in the text as one of four postulates of doctrine or dhammuddesa, it is not only quoted in a learned discussion by a Buddhist disciple, the venerable Ratthapala, as a fundamental point of doctrine, but it is also authenticated by King Koravya of the Kuru country who himself asserts that it is a statement made by the Buddha.

Acchariyaṃ bho Raṭṭhapāla abbhutaṃ bho Raṭṭhapāla yāva subhāsitañ ca idaṃ tena bhagavatā jānatā passatā arahatā sammāsaṃbuddhena attāṇo loko anabhissaro 'ti. Attāṇo hi bho Raṭṭhapāla loko anabhissaro.[M.II.70].

By now it should be sufficiently clear that the Buddhist explanation of the phenomenon of life in the world and its assessment necessarily shows a deflection from the general run of religious thinking the world has witnessed so far. But to assume a position of importance or authority to go so far as to say that it should or should not be so shows very little sense and much less logic. Such a purist stance can by no means lead to universally acceptable and wholesome results. As to the evaluation of the contribution of a religion to the culture of mankind, different criteria are being adopted, depending on considerations like demographic vibrancy, social elitism and economic resourcefulness in the world today.

The Buddhist Impact

In terms of the lessons the world is learning today, or perhaps refusing to learn, it should not be difficult to discover common norms of human values which would be universally applicable. We should have more than a desire to

consolidate such a set of beliefs. We should indeed have the desire to maximize the good that religions can bring upon mankind collectively. In such a scheme, religiousness or spirituality should loom larger than theology. Anything to the contrary should prove to be like the use of atomic weapons to conquer the world, or putting it less nakedly, to secure peace in the world.

To look upon the absence of one's major religious themes in the creed of another as a defect or deficiency shows a lamentable lack of magnanimity. The attempt likewise to obliterate differences and to impress one stamp on the religious beliefs of everybody else should be registered as aggressive and totalitarian. One would be led to believe that such moves are prompted either by ambitious wishful thinking or arrogance born of blissful ignorance. In brief, it would not be less than a spirit of repressive aggression. The world today, at least in the realm of religion, would do well to learn to agree to disagree and to be adequately respectful of one another.

In order to explore the possibilities of an inter-religious dialogue, not for its own sake, but to save man from the brink of disaster on which he is presently perched, let us examine the tone in which students of religion speak of the faith of each other. Making a general appraisal of Buddhism in the history of the world, the author of *The God of Buddha* says:

'..... So we, too, if we are sincere seekers of the way of the Buddha, must return to that early India which was the cradle not only of the physical and mental personality of the Buddha, but also for the tremendous spiritual message of His doctrine - a doctrine eventually destined to go beyond the confines of its homeland and ultimately become the basis of a human civilization for the major part of Asia and praxis of life for all sentient beings in their quest for immortality.'⁶

To this historical evaluation of the role of Buddhism for the furtherance of

⁶ Jamshed Fozdar, *The God of Buddha* [New York / Asia Publ.House,1973], p.v.

human civilization and world culture, very little needs to be added except in point of detail. With regard to Buddhism's impact on western Asia, almost as far as the Caspian Sea, which it reached even before the dawn of the Christian era, what remains as archaeological evidence is, for various historical reasons, very scanty. The colossal Buddha statues of Bamiyan together with the sculptural remains in places like Hadda in Afghanistan eloquently testify to this. Over and above these, one notes the records of historians like Abu' I-Rayhan Muhammad al-Biruni who wrote about a thousand years ago,⁷ detailing the prevalence of Buddhism, even prior to the arrival of Zoroaster, in those regions. Moreover, Buddhism contributed to civilization in general, and to art and culture in particular, of eastern Asia. China, Korea and Japan are adequate proof of our claim, not to speak of what still lies buried under the sands of Central Asia. So it was in the empire of Asoka in the Indian Sub-continent and in other countries of south and southeast Asia like Sri Lanka, Burma and Indonesia.

Having explained Buddhism's very peculiar position with regard to God at the head of religion, I also made an attempt to show that, in spite of it, Buddhism has had enough inner strength to revitalize man to embark on a journey of spiritual ascent. It is an ascent based on, and gathering its momentum from, a carefully reorganized social order. It was also shown, through reference to history, that for more than twenty-five centuries Buddhism has contributed to the well-being of man, at a modest and moderate pace though, contributing more to stabilizing peace than to escalating material prosperity. While it reckoned with the possible corrosion that could come in the wake of the latter, it never upheld poverty as a virtue itself. Charity, on the other hand, with which the good life of the Buddhist invariably begins, is born both of a love of fellow beings and a desire to keep the irksome ego of man within restricted boundaries.

Buddhism's no-god position has been very much misunderstood. Some fail to see any evidence in Buddhism which either directly supports this notion or

⁷ B.A.Litvinsky / Alberuni's India tr. E.C.Sachan Vol.I. London, 1888. p.21

even implies it. Others are categorical in stating that no religion of any worth could possibly take up such a position. This latter group takes up two lines of action. One forcibly reads into the Buddhist texts implications pointing to God the Absolute, the Eternal and the Ultimate. Language-wise, in rendering Pali or Sanskrit terms, these views are untenable. Idea-wise they are inconsistent and contradictory and do not fit in, even clumsily, to the general thesis of Buddhism.

Leaning on the word *kalyāṇa* which means benevolent, wholesome or charming, in the inoffensive compound *kalyāṇamitta* [i.e., a benevolent or charming friend] a certain writer tries to render it as the Lovely, giving the compound the meaning a friend, associate and intimate of the Lovely. Thereafter, he equates this Lovely with the Absolute. In consequence of this seemingly Don Quixotic adventure, the said writer loses himself in a verbal tangle with almost amusing results.

' Now, while Brahma-faring culminates in Nirvana and is synonymous with Nirvana, it cannot be equated with the Lovely because of the following distinction: Brahma-faring can lead to friendship, association and intimacy with the Lovely, but friendship, or association or intimacy, is not the same as identity with the Lovely. The Buddha, too, who on occasions has claimed identity with Dharma and also that he had attained the highest Nirvana, makes no claim of identity with the Lovely, but states that, because of his friendship with the Lovely, beings are able to have Nirvana. Hence this Lovely is higher than the Buddha, since friendship, association and intimacy with It are vital for Buddha's task of salvation. Moreover, since the Buddha too had to seek salvation, one could logically assume that the Lovely was also instrumental for the Buddha's own enlightenment.'⁸

Some others would, through an alleged interest of mankind, call upon the Buddhists to revise their major thesis. They are certain of the absence in

⁸ Jamshed Fozdar, Ibid. p.144.

Buddhism of the concept of God without which, they are equally certain, there can be no salvation for mankind either here or hereafter. Let me repeat here for further examination such a verdict, which comes from a non- Buddhist source, to which I have already referred.

' The development of mankind in our present time urges Buddhists also to reconsider their way and to take history seriously. They can no longer exclude the social dimension from their system. World peace, without which even personal liberation remains impossible, can be established only if mankind forms a unity, a community in which every individual is considered as a being of infinite value and equal rights. Such a community can be formed only if the love of God frees men from their egoism and inspires them with self-giving love.'⁹

This criticism is obviously missing the point. Starting with the problems of man at a grassroots level, problems as seen, known and discerned by man himself, Buddhism takes account of history, and therefore also of the need even to regulate its course. It is for the others to get to know how much the Buddhists in their own system deal with social considerations, and how much they strive to make the unity of mankind a reality. Buddhism prescribes and provides for the ingredients needed for a just and benevolent rule, and for social and economic stability. At the same time, it exposes the foibles and the cunning of leaders of men at all levels.

But it drives no wedge that divides, not even at the level of man and animal. This attitude of the Buddhists is born of a primary adoration of life, which forms, in fact, the first precept in their ethical system. The consequence is that Buddhism works negatively for the protection of life against destruction and positively for the development of unbounded love throughout the entire universe. It needs hardly to be stressed at this stage that the very goal of Buddhism is the overthrow of egoism and the perfection of loving-kindness. The first step towards

⁹ Theobald Diedrich - Ibid. p.44

that goal is symbolised by the very name of the future Buddha, the Buddha-to-be, whom the Buddha Gotama has already named as Maitreya or the Compassionate One.¹⁰

Since I have now indicated briefly two ways in which non-Buddhists have reacted in response to Buddhism, particularly with regard to its non-acceptance of the idea of God, let me conclude with a question. As we approach the end of the century today, would you accept either of these positions or would you explore the possibility of a new approach in the light of what has been said so far about the core of Buddhism, its scope and concern for mankind?

(7) Religion, Culture and Temperance

I accepted the invitation to address this august assembly on the assumption that the world today, more than ever before, is ready to return to the sanity of religious thinking in its search for a solution to the problems plaguing the world on all sides, east or west, north or south. Disease, death and destruction on the one side and moral decay on the other, as well as disaster in the wake of scientific and industrial development are assailing man continuously, in front and from behind. Believe it or not, this happens all the time at the request of man and on his own invitation. At this assembly, small or large as it may be, let us forget everything else and concentrate on man, on his well-being as man in this very limited world of ours. Let us all make a genuine surrender of all our egoistic greatnesses, the big powers and the small ones, the developed and the under developed, and pool our resources together, each from his own vantage point. The totality of what is gathers together, we believe would be enough and adequate to put all ills of the world right. That shall bring about a kingdom of man

¹⁰ Digha Nikaya III. 76

on earth, an ideal to look for. and the wrking basis for that which we can offer from this part of the world, via Biddhism, is *maitrī* or freindly love or loving kindness. Joseph Goldstein delivering the Wit Lectures at the Harvard Divinity School on March 4, 1992, said of this *maitrī* that 'it is free from the desire and attachment that characterize love as we usually understand it.' And he added : 'When we are filled with loving kindness we wish others to be happy, at peace and free from suffering, without any expectation of return or even of acknowledgement.' (Harvard Divinity Bulletin-1992.vol.21.no 3 page 3).

Coming down to my own address to day, whatever meaning the dictionaries give to the word transcendence and whatever interpretation researchers assign to it in their theses, the word transcendence primarily envisages the possibility of man's ascent above the turmoils of human existence. The stress here, as far as Buddhism is concerned, is definitely on man's achievement as man, by his own will and power. In the culture of our religion, namely Buddhism, we use the word *lokuttara* or *lokottara* to refer to this, implying an upward movement, a going beyond this world of empirical experience. This concept results from the use by man of a higher norm, of a superior measurement to gauge human experience. Speculative as this may seem to many, we do not fight shy of this experiment or venture, for the achievement by man of something which transcends man, sometimes referred to as *uttarimanussadhamma*.

Testimony of religious history in the east has proved this to be more real and more definite than Neil Armstrong's landing on the moon. Men standing on this terra firma have attained it here and now in what we describe as *jivan mukta*, an achievement in one's life time. These basic remarks explain the true concept of the religion within the frame work of Buddhist thinking. It is so organically woven with the life process of man for the improvement of its own quality here and now, that it becomes something distinct with a character of its own, without being an admixture of multiple creeds or being a common denominator common to all religions. For each religion has its own definite and distinct definition of life and

its transcendence.

To the Buddhist, culture in the true sense of the word, particularly when it is used together with the concept of religion, means success and achievement in this direction of transcendence, of man ascending above and over his basic human nature. We do not look upon culture as a tailored product, made to measure. Culture is viewed as the manifestation of a continuous process of growth and development, moving in the direction of quality improvement, improving for a specific purpose. Culture must elevate man and ennoble man, for the benefit of man-kind as a whole, not to persecute and eliminate the other for the propagation and proliferation of the chosen creed. We wish to believe that the dark days of Crusades and Holy Wars are no more. But the effects of subterfuge action in this direction are seen and felt all the time, not as mere ripples on the surface but as giant rollers breaking in all directions. These days, this process is less with the sword and less at gun point as it has despicably happened in the history of our land but very profusely with various forms of foreign aid in diverse shades and diverse shapes. The Buddha's own announcement before the proclamation of his teachings to the world was 'Open for them are the doors to deathlessness. They who have ears to hear let them direct their faith in that direction.'

Such a concept of culture necessarily involves a larger vision of human development, both material and religious. Viewed from the angle of Buddhism, this cultural growth also entails other-worldly considerations, considerations relating to the success and failure of man beyond death. Here we justifiably pride ourselves as Buddhists in the worth of our value judgements. For man alone, according to Buddhism, is the architect of his own fortunes. Therefore the Buddhist is constrained to look upon all forms of living here which definitely befouls his fortunes beyond death as being unquestionably contrary and contradictory to the cultural norms he can contain within his three score years and ten life span here.

Therefore it is not possible for a Buddhist or Buddhists in the plural, with any sanity in their heads, no matter of what stature they are, to compartmentalize their cultural life to suit various ages or stages, and project each one in turn before the world as the one and only desirable one. With an absolute and enduring value system as that of the Buddhists there has to be a strict constancy in the cultural policies of a country and its people, even in the face of disquieting ups and downs in their socio-economic set-ups or their political arenas. Therefore in Sri Lanka, policy planners from within or without have to pay heed to this. Any attempt to ride roughshod over them, due to pressures no matter from where, would result in disruptive violent protests from areas which normally would lie dormant and inoffensive.

We take up this line of argument because we wish to indicate to the world outside the pattern in which the majority of the people of this country as Buddhists have to think. Otherwise, students of Buddhism in the world out side would have no place to turn to and look for a model of Buddhist living and Buddhist thinking.

Now the stage is set in our thinking to talk of temperance. Temperance, whether as moderation in the indulgence of the natural appetites and passions or as moderation in the use of alcoholic liquors and even entire abstinence from them, temperance is in the spirit of Buddhism. Nay, it is the very spirit of Buddhism, whether one likes it or not. This is no tall claim for those who know the subject. There is one basic word in Buddhism without imbibing the spirit of which no Buddhist can claim to be a Buddhist. The word is *saṃvara* which means restraint, discipline or control. Knowing the limits, of anything and in anything, and knowing the consequences of exceeding them and therefore acting with moderation, these are the implications of restraint in Buddhism. Whether it is with regard to food and drink or sex appetite, the rule is the same. In spite of the listing of all the ill-effects of excesses in these areas, the world has yet to learn, learn more than a bitter lesson.

Coming now to the question of temperance as total abstinence from alcoholic liquors or intoxicants that confuse the mind, it is well to remember that the basic five precepts which are laid down to regulate the moral life of the layman, namely the *pañcasīla*, has as its fifth item an injunction on this. Likewise, the disciples in the monastic order of the Buddha too have a precept which makes the use of intoxicants a specific offence. In both cases the arguments used against the use of intoxicants remain the same.

In the case of members of the monastic community who are held to have taken up the path of renunciation with greater earnestness and sincerity, it is asked whether any one of them would resort to alcohol or drugs which impair and damage soundness of judgement. Sound judgement referred to in Buddhist texts under the terms *sato sampajāno* (i.e. possessing mental alertness and correct awareness) is a sine qua non of high quality religious or spiritual living. In another analysis of the ill-effects of the use of intoxicants six considerations are highlighted (see Sigalovada Sutta of the Dīghanikāya). Five of these pertain to losses suffered at a worldly mundane level like depletion of economic resources, i.e. financial drainage, increase of quarrelsomeness, liability to be assailed by diseases, loss of reputation, and loss of a sense of propriety and decorum. As the sixth is added the deterioration of intellectual power (*paññāya dubbhī karanā*). The physical damage to man through alcohol and drugs brought under proneness to disease and brain damage are amply attested by modern medical research.

The money-oriented business world of today excites and pushes men into these excesses of indulgence and consumption. Temperance is lost in the wilderness of modern consumerism. One is never sure whether over-centralised controls over these would ever be effective. Decentralised action for control and correction at the domestic level, primarily in terms of the needs of the family as the most respected social unit, is essentially the need of the day in Sri Lanka. It has to be an honest search from within, of the individual and of the family as his

immediate neighbour, and one should be both constrained and restrained from doing anything to increase one's wealth or one's power and prestige at the expense of the total well-being of man and his family.

May all beings be well and happy.

THE END